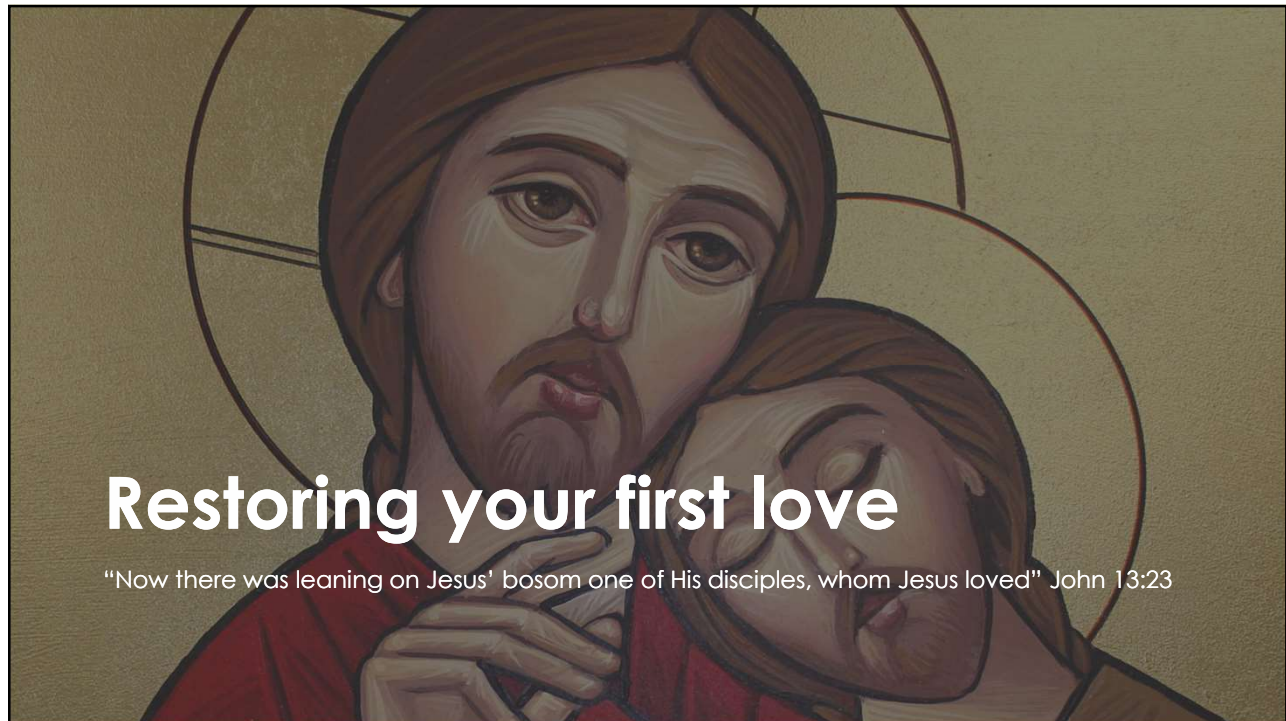




1

God desires our love

- 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ² "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.
- Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that **you have left your first love.** ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. — Rev 2:1-6

FOR I AM JEALOUS
OVER YOU WITH
GODLY JEALOUSY: FOR
I HAVE ESPOUSED YOU
TO ONE HUSBAND,
THAT I MAY PRESENT
YOU AS A CHASTE
VIRGIN TO CHRIST.
2 CORINTHIANS 11:2

2

My first love

"We Love Him Because He First Loved Us." (1 Jn. 4:19)

- God's Bride
- Honeymoon Package
- 7 Years at Gate



3

My first love

"We Love Him Because He First Loved Us." (1 Jn. 4:19)

- Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew
 - "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." Matthew 4:19
- Greeks seeking to see Christ
 - Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. John 12:26
- Come and follow me
 - "Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and **come**, take up the cross, **and follow Me**.'" Mark 10:21

4

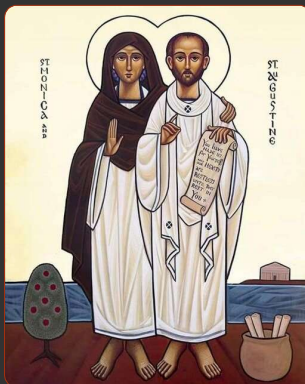
Have I loved Him?



- **MOSES' CHARACTER.** BASIL THE GREAT: He who hated the pomp of royalty returned to the lowly state of his own race. He preferred to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to have the fleeting enjoyment of sin. He who, possessing naturally a love for justice, on one occasion even before the government of the people was entrusted to him was seen inflicting on the wicked punishment to the extent of death because of his natural hatred of villainy. He was banished by those to whom he had been a benefactor. He gladly left the uproar of the Egyptians and went to Ethiopia and, spending there all his time apart from others, devoted himself for forty entire years to the contemplation of creation.
- Those who are filled with divine love will become like strangers in this world (EX 2:15-22)

5

Invested Love St. Augustine's friend

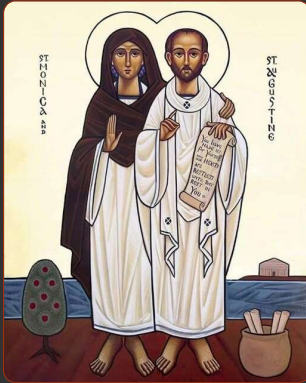


- During this time, Augustine "gained a very dear friend" about his own age who shared the same studies and interests. Their friendship was, Augustine tells us, "sweeter to me than all the sweetness of my life thus far." Because they were friends, Augustine was able to "turn him away from the true faith" and "turn him toward those superstitious and harmful fables which my mother mourned in me" (namely, Manicheanism) so that, "With me, this man went wandering off in error and my soul could not exist without him" (Conf. 4.4.7).
- After a year, this friend, whom Augustine never names, took ill and was near death, so his family had him baptized. Augustine scoffed at this religious claptrap and assumed his friend would do so as well. But when his friend recovered, and Augustine tried to joke with him about it, he was shocked to find that his friend had a different attitude. "Immediately, as soon as I could talk to him," writes Augustine:

6

Invested Love

St. Augustine's friend



- And I did this as soon as he was able, for I never left him and we hung on each other overmuch—I tried to jest with him, supposing that he also would jest in return about that baptism which he had received when his mind and senses were inactive, but which he had since learned that he had received. But he recoiled from me, as if I were his enemy, and, with a remarkable and unexpected freedom, he admonished me that, if I desired to continue as his friend, I must cease to say such things" (Conf. 4.4.7).
- He was disconsolate. He had lost his first close friend, and he did not know what to do with his grief:
- My heart was utterly darkened by this sorrow and everywhere I looked I saw death. My native place was a torture room to me . . . And all the things I had done with him—now that he was gone—became a frightful torment. My eyes sought him everywhere, but they did not see him; and I hated all places because he was not in them, because they could not say to me, "Look, he is coming," as they did when he was alive and absent (Conf. 4.4.9).

7

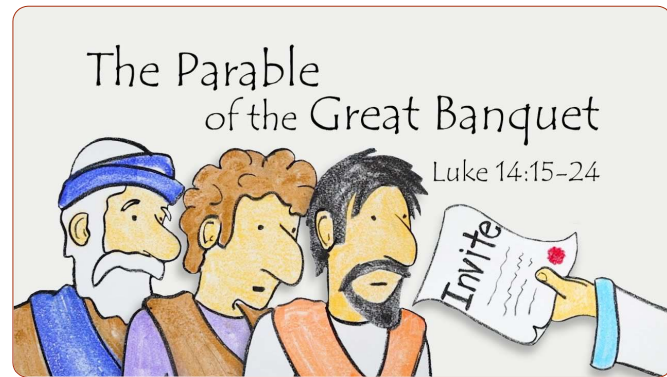
Have you left your first love?

- Where are you in contrast to your potential?
- By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him. - Songs of Songs 3:1
- How long, O Lord, Will you forget me forever? – Psalm 12
- "Look, I go forward, but He is not there, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him." – Job 23:8-9



8

**Have you
left your first
love?**



9

God wants us to return "Return to me and I will return to you"

- Sometimes we feel defeated because of sins, being left with no hope for repentance. Sometimes we go through periods where we feel so deep in sin, that we can not even bring ourselves to repentance because we feel that our sin is too great.
- This is what happened with Judas, who after betraying our Lord became so full of despair that he did not repent and ended his life. (Matthew 27:5)
- St. John Chrysostom's letters to Theodore

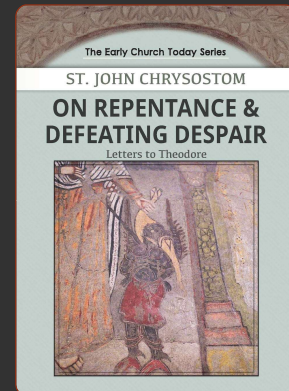


10

God wants us to return

St. John on Despair and Repentance

- Devil aims for us to despair
 - "For the reason why the devil plunges us into thoughts of despair is that he might cut off the hope which is towards God, the safe anchor, the foundation of life, the guide of the way which leads to heaven, the salvation of perishing souls." (pg. 15)
- God accepts to restore the slightest of efforts
 - "For such is the loving kindness of God: He never turns his face away from a sincere repentance, but if anyone has pushed on to the very extremity of wickedness, and chooses to return from there towards the path of virtue, God accepts and welcomes, and does everything so as to restore him to his former position." (pg.33)



11

Path of Restoration

Stages of separation

- And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. ² Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them*, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. ³ Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.
- ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

12

Path of Restoration

Stages of separation

- ⁶ And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"
- ⁸ But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, ¹¹ "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." ¹² Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw *anything* like this!"

13

Path of Restoration

Stages of separation

- Persevering through Obstacles
- Approaching Christ in Faith
- Release of sin
- Responding



14

1. Persevering despite obstacles

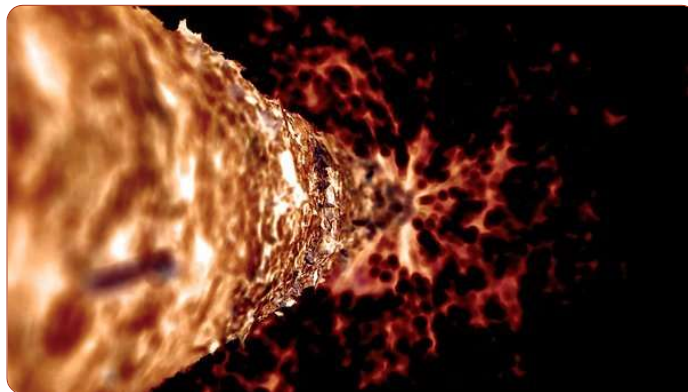
"And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was."



15

1. Persevering despite obstacles

Pillar of fire



16

2. Approaching Christ in Faith

"When Jesus saw their faith"



17

Luke 7:42-43

King James Version Bible

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said un...

18

3. Release of sin

When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."



19

Hosea 11

- "When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. ²As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images. ³"I taught Ephraim to walk, Taking them by their arms; *But they did not know that I healed them.* ⁴I drew them *with gentle cords, With bands of love,* And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped *and fed them.*
- ⁵"He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, Because *they refused to repent.* ⁶And the sword shall slash in his cities, Devour his districts, And consume *them,* Because of their own counsels. ⁷My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt *Him.*
- ⁸"*How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?* How can I make you like Admah? *How can I set you like Zeboiim?* My heart ⁹churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. ⁹I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not ¹⁰come with terror.

20

3 MIRACLES OF RISING THE DEAD



RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS

Daughter was in bedroom at home but *not yet publicly acknowledged.*



RAISING OF THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN

Son has just died, out of home, but not in tomb / *just publicly acknowledged.*



RAISING LAZARUS

Lazarus had died **4 days** to the point where *a stench had now dissipated.*

21

4. Responding

- To His voice; understanding the message and responding positively



22



4. Responding

Proper Service is spiritual food

- The goal is not the works, the works/responsibilities is a guidelines to the path of faith
- "Those people who lead a spiritual life of prayer and contemplation, such as monks, are usually referred to as the earthly angels or the heavenly people. Servants can also be angels. The term is not used exclusively to refer to monks. Has not the Lord called the shepherds of the seven churches angels? He said, "to the angel of the church of..."etc....Those are also considered angels"

23



4. Responding

Proper Service is spiritual food

- We will be misled if we think that the love of the Lord is merely restricted to prayers, seclusion, meditation and contemplation. Service also reflects a great love and exhibits an overwhelming zeal for the Lord. However, there are some who oftentimes opt to avoid service and prefer to live a life of seclusion and meditation as if service will alienate them from the love of God. On the contrary. Service can strengthen man's love for the Lord beyond limit. The Lord will gently urge them: Come my beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards. There I will give you my love.

24

4. Responding

Proper Service is spiritual food

- *Let us lodge in the villages. When you lodge there, I will be there with you. We will be lodging together in the villages. Let us get up early to the vines; let us see if the vine has budded. All of these expressions are in the plural form. It is as though the Lord is confirming: I will never ever leave you alone in your service. I will serve with you. I will go forth to the field with you. I will lodge with you in the village. I will get up early with you to go to the vines. I will accompany you always. You are not working alone.*



25

Conclusion

Psalm 145: "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth"

- I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, And I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, And shall sing of Your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.
- All Your works shall praise You, O Lord, And Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, And talk of Your power, To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, And the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord upholds all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. The Lord preserves all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, And all flesh shall bless His holy name Forever and ever.

26