

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

REMEMBER YOUR FIRST LOVE | ASLEEP

RYAN BRAMLETT | SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

Traders Point, how are we doing? Doing alright? Hey, so good to be with you today. Before we get rolling in this message, I just want to take a moment and look back and celebrate a little bit.

We just came out of a huge series in the life of our church where our lead pastor, Aaron, walked through the topics in the center of the deconstruction conversation. Week in and week out he poured himself out. Every message had so much godly wisdom, holding onto that tension of grace and truth just wrapped in empathy.

You know those messages don't just happen. Right? Hundreds of man hours of prayer and study, so can we just take a moment and celebrate Pastor Aaron and all that he did. He brought hope and help to so many.

But today we are starting a brand-new series of messages called *Asleep*. Now, I love to sleep. Alright? I am a big fan of it. I'm great at it. So add that to it. But when my wife and I started doing premarital counseling we realized that not everyone loves to sleep.

It's actually become part of a conversation now anytime I'm walking through counseling with a couple. I ask them about what they think when it comes to naps.

Watch this—round of applause for those of you who love naps. Love 'em. Yeah, there are a lot of people. But watch this. Round of applause if you do not like naps. Did you hear how tired those claps sounded? Maybe you need a nap.

What we're going to be doing in this series is talking about a different kind of sleep. It's kind of that space, that fogged filled space, where you're not completely awake but you aren't asleep either. It's like the worst of both worlds.

We kind of find ourselves in these moments where we don't even realize that we're in them until we're out of them. You know what I mean? You leave from work or you leave from school and you remember getting into your car, but then you don't remember anything until you pull into the driveway and you're like, "What just happened? How did I get here?"

And the part that is scary is how much of our lives are lived in that space where we're just kind of going through the motions—just heartless. That's the space we're going to be speaking to in this series. And we're going to be looking at the words of Jesus as He writes these letters in the book of Revelation to seven churches.



What I just want to say is that this is more than just a Bible study. Let this series be an invitation for God to kind of shake us out of complacency, to stir us up so that we can have a vision for where He is taking us in this season.

As we jump into the book of Revelation, it's one of those books that almost provokes as much of a response as naps. People either love it or they don't know what to do with it and really don't want to go anywhere near it. There are all kinds of different views and opinions.

But before we get rolling, I just want to set us up with some background and kind of reclaim some words that maybe you've heard before and they've kind of taken on a different meaning over the years. Okay?

So when we look at the book of Revelation, it's the last book in the Bible. And the question we really need to ask is what genre is this book? Because that decides how we read it. You believe that to be true. You wouldn't read a history book the same way that you would read a book of poetry. So, what is Revelation?

Well, it's tricky because it's actually three different genres all in one. The first one is:

Apocalypse = unveiling or revelation

It's an apocalypse. And I know when you hear that word, maybe you think the end of the world. Armageddon, stuff like that. But for the original audience apocalypse just meant an unveiling or a revelation. That's where we get the name for this book.

The second type of genre it is, it's:

Prophecy = comfort + challenge

And once again we like to take prophecy and take it all the way to make it this futuristic thing, but really, at the base level, a prophecy is just a word from the Lord to His people to either comfort or to challenge. And we see that in the book of Revelation as well.

And the last thing we need to hold on to is that it is also a:

Pastoral Letter = a call to discipleship

It's a call to discipleship. This is a real letter written to real churches at a specific time when they are facing persecution. And these words from Jesus are meant to give them that comfort and that challenge to continue to move forward.

We even have a map right here. When you think about this, these are all of the churches that are represented in the book of Revelation.

And at the time the author, John, had been exiled to Patmos. It's this island off the shore. They couldn't kill him so they thought, "The best thing we can do is remove him from the people. That way his influence will kind of die out."

It did not work. He continues to write this Revelation from Jesus and then he sends it off to these seven churches that he would have been a pastor of.

So what we're going to do as we go through this series, we're just going to pick one church every week, look at the words from Jesus to them and what it means for us as well in this season.

So if you have your Bibles go ahead and get to Revelation, chapter 2. We're going to start in verse 1. And I just want to read the letter in its entirety. I'm going to read it all together and then we're just going to go line by line and talk about what's here. Okay?

So chapter 2, starting in verse 1. These are the words of Jesus. He says:

"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands: 'I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

'But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.

'Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.'" Revelation 2:1-7 (NLT)

So what we're going to do, like I said, is just start from the beginning and make our way through this letter and see what Jesus is saying. Let's just read verse 1 one more time. It says:

"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands." Revelation 2:1 (NLT)

So Revelation is a picture book of sorts. What it says here is, "The one who holds the seven stars in his right hand." Think about what kind of being it would take to hold seven stars in His right hand. He's talking about the idea that He is God. He is supreme and reigns over it all.

And then He says, "To the seven lampstands, the seven gold lampstands." We learned about this in chapter 1. The lampstands represent the churches. And what we see here is not only the seven stars, but the seven lampstands. In apocalyptic literature numbers,

a lot of times, have meaning. Seven is one of those numbers. It represents fullness or completeness.

So, in a way, even though Jesus is writing to these seven specific churches, at the same time He's writing to all churches for all times.

The first one He talks to is this church in Ephesus. And I just want to take a little bit of time here and give us the background story of the church in Ephesus because it will help this letter make more sense as to what they were experiencing when they would have received this letter.

The church in Ephesus gets started by a guy named Paul who shows up on the scene in this city. It's a giant city with just a very small group of believers. And they hadn't even heard the full gospel. They'd just heard a little bit.

So Paul goes up to them and he's like, "Hey, have you guys heard about Jesus." And they are like, "We've heard about what John said about baptism, repentance of sin, and all of that stuff." And Paul was like, "Hey, there is actually a lot more to the story." And he tells them about Jesus and all that He's done. And then he has them baptized into the Holy Spirit. And that's when things really begin to change.

Look at what it says in Acts 19, verse 11. It says:

"God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles." Acts 19:11 (NLT)

It's pretty wild if you read this account. It says that anything Paul even touched they would take and bring it to someone who was sick or demon possessed and they would be healed.

Every chance Paul gets he goes throughout this city and he's preaching the gospel and he's telling people about Jesus, and people begin to believe. Look at what happens next. It says:

"...A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored. Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices." Acts 19:17-18 (NLT)

So, here's what happened. Ephesus was a free city, meaning every kind of worship, every kind of god could be found in this city. All kinds of temples. Everything that you could imagine was happening.

And these people begin to see Jesus. And in this moment they began to give up all of the things that they had known, everything their background was filled with.

And then one night they gathered together all of the books, all of the idols, all of the witchcraft, the sorcery, and it says that they bring it to the middle of the road, millions of dollars of stuff, and they set it on fire.

It's this beautiful imagery of them coming to this place and saying, "God, I just want You and I want everything else to be burned away. I only want You, You and You alone."

And then this small remnant called the church begins to lead and they begin to shape this city. But not everyone is too excited about what is going on and we see this in verse 23. It says:

"About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way." Acts 19:23 (NLT)

Now the Way was one of the first words to describe followers of Jesus. And he says in that context, that these are the people who are getting this letter—this would have been the next generation coming up.

They are living in this tension where a small group of them believe, but there are a bunch of them who were living in trouble. There were a bunch of them who were kind of being exiled. There were a bunch of them who were being persecuted and they were beginning to be killed for their faith. That's when they would have received this letter, in the midst of all this trouble.

And look at what Jesus says. He says:

"I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. You have patiently suffered for me without quitting." Revelation 2:2-3 (NLT)

So Jesus says, "I know all of the things you do." I think that is important to remember today. There is nothing that you are hiding from God. He sees it all. He knows it all. And then He just goes down this list, celebrating all of the things that He sees that He loves.

Maybe you've had that thought of, "What is it that I do that Jesus really celebrates and loves and wants me to do more of?" We get a short list right here. It says:

Jesus celebrates when we:

work hard

have patient endurance

don't tolerate evil people

examine the claims of false teachers

patiently suffer without quitting

And there is this idea that we don't tolerate evil people. This was within the church. They began to follow this Way and they saw God's way. And anyone who was falling short of

that, anyone who was kind of hypocritical saying one thing but believing something different or living something different, they would call them out and they would challenge one another in love and in grace and in truth.

And they examined the claims of false teachers. That's what He was getting to with the Nicolaitans. There were so many new groups rising taking a little bit of Christianity, adding their own twist to it, and presenting it as an equal alternative. He says, "No, no. I know that you guys don't let that happen."

He celebrates them over and over again. And as I was reading that this week I was brought to this question:

Would Jesus celebrate us for these same things?

Are we living out those things? This is a church that sounds amazing. This is a church that does remind me a lot of Traders Point. I see those things in us.

And you can imagine the leader, the pastor of this church, getting up and reading this letter to all of the people and you can just feel them celebrate, being excited, like, "God sees us. He knows everything. And He's celebrating us." There are high fives happening in the back. Everyone is pumped. Chest bumps and other stuff people do. You know?

But here's what I want us to see. We can do all of the right things but if we're missing this one part, if we are missing this one piece then it's ultimately not what Jesus wants for us. He doesn't want us to just do good things. He doesn't want us to just go through the motions. He doesn't want us to be heartless when it comes to Him. Look at what He says. He says:

"But I have this complaint against you." And you can hear the sounds of the high fives grow silent. And with eyes of fear they looked to the pastor to see what He's going to say next. It says:

"You don't love me or each other as you did at first!" Revelation 2:4 (NLT)

And maybe you're like, "What do you mean? This church is on fire for Jesus. They are doing all of these things. They are suffering. They are calling people out. They are spreading the gospel. What more could He want from them?"

LOVE

Any time you get with Jesus it's only a matter of time before He makes the main thing the main thing. He boils it all down. It's the most important thing. Loving God and loving people. And He says, "You've lost this."

It reminds me of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians. He said:

"If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:3 (NLT)

You see, love is what makes or breaks it all. It's not just to do the things, it's the motivation for why we are here in the first place. And the correction that Jesus gives to the church in Ephesus is the same one you and I have to wrestle with as well.

He calls them out. He says, "You started one way. You had that love. But you don't have it any more." And I just want to ask you today, would you say that?

I don't love Jesus or others like I did at first

Would you say, "I don't love Jesus or others like I did at first."? "I'm still coming. I'm still part of things, but that love is just not the same."

There is no shame in it, it's just a moment of vulnerability, a moment to confess, and to say, "I don't have that love. Not like I once did. I come to church when I can, I pray when I can, and I go to group when I can, and I serve when I can."

But there is like this indifference to your faith where you can kind of take it or leave it. That's what it feels like to be asleep. And you're reminded of it anytime you come in. You're standing there and you're worshipping and you're going through the motions, but you don't have it like you once did.

You see the people next to you and their hands are in the air and they are crying and they are filled with so much passion and you're like, "I wish I could have that again."

You go to serve and you're there and you're present, but you're not really there. You see the joy on other people's faces as they make a difference, but really you're just checking your phone and counting the minutes until you can be done.

Some of you even come in here and you sit through the message and you literally fall asleep during the message. I know because I can see you. It's very bright in here.

Remember your first love

And Jesus sees all of this and this is His call. He says, "Hey, I want you to remember your first love. That's the beginning. You want that back you've got to remember your first love. There is something different about that first love, that beginning love. It's in all aspects of our life.

Remember when you got your first real job and you went and you were blown away that they would hire you to do what you are doing. And you just had on rose colored glasses.

You walked in and you were like, "This place is incredible. The people, pleasant. The pay, unreal. I didn't even know checks could be this big. I can't believe I'm getting paid this much. I might have to use some of this money to get security because I can't be walking around with this kind of money. This is a lot."

But you fast forward a few years and that passion and that love has kind of faded and you're really going back and forth now. And you're going to have a fist fight in the parking lot this Friday. That love is gone.

Or, think back to that romantic relationship that you had or have. I was thinking about this this week. When I first started dating my wife, I was infatuated. I hung on to every word she said. I wanted to be with her. I was there.

I remember I was just going around one week moving to a few different places and she would pick something up and talk about how much she liked it and then put it down. I woke up one day and I just recalled everything she put her hands on and I was like, "I'm buying it all." Take it easy. Most of it was pretty small, like Chapstick or candy. But one of the things was a book that she really wanted.

So I go out and I got all of this. I created this gift basket and I gave it to her. And she was smitten. She enjoyed it. How do I know? Well because she called me the next day when I was at work. And I'm just thinking, "My sugar pie just wants to hear my voice."

So I picked up the phone and I noticed pretty quickly that she didn't mean to call me. She butt dialed me. She's hanging out with one of her friends but she's telling her about how amazing I am and all of these gifts that I gave her.

Did I hang up when I realized, "This is a private conversation. Not meant for me." Yes. Eventually I hung up. But I wanted to know how else I could better serve and love her. So I stayed on the phone just a little bit longer.

I want you to go back to that place right now. I want you to remember when you first saw Jesus for who He is and all that He has done. When you came to terms with the fact that there is a God of this universe, powerful beyond measure, who knows no ends, created all things, spoke them into existence, and then looked out and said, "I love my creation."

And it didn't just end there with this love, but He looked out and He saw the brokenness and He saw the pain and He said, "I'm willing to send you my own Son, Jesus. And He's going to go in and He's going to live that perfect life. And He's going to die on a cross for you."

This God of the universe loves you so much that He would sacrifice His only Son. Remember how you felt when you got that new identity. When you were no longer what you did or what was done to you, but you were established as a child of God.

Do you remember? Do you remember that space and that freedom that you began to walk in when all of the sin fell away and you walked in this peace and this love? That's the space we've got to get back to. That's the space that we want to live in remembering all that He has done for us, and who He is. And because of that, who we are.



But then He gets to this space, He says, "You were there but you're not there. And I think the ESV translates what is happening here a little bit better. It says:

"But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first." Revelation 2:4 (ESV)

They didn't just lose it. They didn't misplace it. He says, "You have abandoned it." You've abandoned it. And that gets closer to the original. The Greek word here is *release*. You released it. You let it go. He says, "You had Me."

Think back to your first love, when you came to Jesus. What happened? He became ultimate. And at the time you were holding on to all of these different things trying to get identity, trying to get purpose. And in a moment you released all of it and you clung to Him.

He said, "You had Me. But now you've abandoned Me. You've abandoned your first love." That's the space that we've got to get to right now. And be honest. We need to:

Remember what took God's place

There is something that has crept in. There is something that we've seen. And we let go of God subtly and began to grab on to other things. In first John it gives us a pretty good umbrella of what those things look like:

POWER. PLEASURE. PRIDE.

There is something in your life right now that is giving you some form of power that you are holding on to, or pleasure that is making you feel a certain way, or it's pride. You've hit enough rough moments, now you are like, "I need to control all of this." You are clinging to it. And Jesus is saying it will never work.

LET GO

"I need you to get back to your first love. You have to come open handed. Let it all go and cling to Me. Remember all that I've done." And then He says this:

"...Turn back to me and do the works you did at first." Revelation 2:5 (NLT)

So he says:

REMEMBER

And then I want you to:

RETURN

Return. I want you to go back. Now go back to when you first saw Jesus for who He was, what He had done for you, your natural response was what? "I'm all in. I'm on fire



for Jesus." You saw the world differently. You loved differently. You approached settings differently. You prayed big, crazy prayers. There was nothing that was impossible.

You spent so much time with God. You even spoke a different language. You spoke Bible. Someone would come to you on the street, like, "Hey, can you spare some change?" And you'd be like, "Brother, silver and gold I do not have for you, but the Word of the Lord I shall leave with you."

"No, that's alright."

But that fire. I'm all in. I'm giving everything I've got. Do you still have that fire, that devotion? A lot of times we succumb to duty, just going through the motions. He says, "I want devotion. I want you to go back to the way that you did it in the beginning."

Recently, I sat down with this guy who was 19, Isaac. He's on fire for Jesus. And he sat there and he started telling me about his life. He's traveling around the city going to these different Bible studies. He just wants to know more about God.

He's trying to figure out where he can serve. He started a podcast for his friends so that he could talk more about Jesus. Maybe somebody will listen to it.

He started writing worship songs. I said, "You write worship songs?" He said, "No. But I have to get it out. I have to share what God has done for me." His whole life was around this question:

How can I give my life to express the love I have received from God?

How can I give everything I've got in any way that will somewhat resemble all that God has done for me.

And Jesus says, "That's the space I want you to live in. I want you to live with that devotion, that fire, that passion." He tells them:

RETURN TO THE BASICS

You know we look at this very seriously as a church. We've done these studies looking back at church history over 2,000 years, followers of Jesus, followers of the Way, churches like Ephesus, churches across time and say, "What is it about them that is the same? Every healthy church, what did they have, what have they been a part of, what have they been devoted to?"

And we've created this picture right here. It's the Great Commission Engine, that's what we call it. It has these major sections here: we help people know God, that's important; we help people find life-giving relationships, have community; we help people make a difference, not just practically as we serve others but eternally sharing the gospel with them.



Now, a lot of times when we hear a message like the one I'm giving, it kind of spurs us up to get back to our first love, to do the things we did at first.

You read this and you're like, "I get it. I'm going to start my Bible reading plan, not today, but tomorrow. I'm going to get back to that life-giving relationship. I'm going to go back to my group. I haven't been in six months. I'm going to show up on Wednesday." They will love it. Alright? "Make a difference. I hear you pastor. I'll start serving on Sundays."

Can I say, "Please don't do any of those things just yet."? A lot of times we jump back in and we are just like, "I'm going to build this thing back. I'm going to start doing those things." And it will be six months from now that you'll be tired and asleep, gassed out wondering if this thing is real.

What I would encourage you to do today is to get back to your first love. It's the fuel that any of this will happen from. It's prayer and the Holy Spirit.

What I would plead for you to do is to get alone, not with me, not with this happening up here. You and God, to be before Him in His presence. To be overwhelmed with His love, convicted, fueled with a fuel you can't get by just mustering it up. But to be completely filled with Him. And you will begin to see life very, very differently.

When you go to read the Scriptures, it's not just so that you can check the box and do it because it's what good Christians are supposed to do. No, you desperately want to know a little bit more about your God.

Life giving relationships become very, very different. You don't just go to group because you're supposed to go to group. You go to group because you know that this is the life that God wants for you. To be in community, to be with brothers and sisters and for that to kind of go out into the city from there. I'm going to meet with you. I'm going to challenge you. I'm going to be open and vulnerable and confess and share and really do life together.

And I'm going to serve. I'm going to make a difference in this world. I'm going to meet the needs of those around me practically, not because I feel guilty, but because I feel convicted.

Jesus said, "I've not come to be served but to serve others." And our God washes feet. Our God does whatever He had to do. He was a servant to all. So we say, "I want to be like that because that will bring me closer to Jesus."

And all along the way we are filled with this unending power and passion and love—we're awakened.

Jesus also gives some pretty sobering words here at the end. He tells us exactly what will happen if we continue to go through this.

If you continue to step away from Me and release yourself from Me, here's what I'm going to do. He says:

"...If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches." Revelation 2:5 (NLT)

What He's saying is, "I will remove the light from the lampstands." And the light represents God's presence and power. God is saying, "If you don't want to do it My way, then I'm out."

And I'm telling you, if God removes His presence and power from this place, it will be a sad day, because without that this is all for naught. This is just a pretty building with some kind people to serve, some great musicians, but just another motivational speaker leading people to nowhere. No real help. No real hope.

But if His light is here and His presence and power is here then this is a city on a hill, this is the hope of the world, this is the place that has the love that this world so desperately needs.

What does He call us to do?

REMEMBER

He says, "I want you to remember that."

RETURN

Return to that. Do those things. And then, this is it:

REMAIN

Don't leave. Don't let go. Don't get distracted. Don't get tired. Don't go back to that fog filled place because I have so much more for you.

It reminds me of the language in John 15 where Jesus says, "I am the vine. You are the branches. You can do nothing apart from Me. What I need you to do is stay close. What I need you to do is stay in My presence."

This is how we respond. It reminds me of the conclusion Paul comes to in Romans when he sees it, when he remembers all that God has done, continues to do. He says this is the response:

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." Romans 12:1 (NIV)

This is the only way I know that, when you want to get back to that first love, you want to get back to the life that God truly has for you, it's to make ourselves and our lives a



living sacrifice before Him. That we would bring our lives to the alter. That we would stay there and offer ourselves completely.

That's pleasing. That's aroma. That's language of smoke. That we would set ourselves on fire with love and devotion and passion and we would bring ourselves to that fire. And just like in Ephesus, we would bring everything else with it. We repent of all of the things that are getting in the way. We would release them and they would be burned away in the fire.

And you and I would be refined by the fire—every part, every impurity, everything that is not of God. That we would trust and we would realize that the safest place we could be in is in the fire, consumed with His fire, consumed with His love.

It reminds me of that bush in Exodus. The bush is on fire, it's consumed, but it's not burning up. This is the place that God wants us to live. This is the devotion and the passion that we need to reclaim.

But here's the thing. He offers it His way. It is all of Me for all of you. Everything else is going to be removed. "I want all of you. And in return what I'm going to ask you to do is love others like I've loved you." Love God in the same way. That's what He wants.

And you and I, as we circle around this and we get back to that fire, back to that devotion I just want to give you another reason why we should live with this fire, why we should have this devotion. It will guarantee that Jesus and His light is with us. Remember this:

Where there's fire, there's light.

The light of God will always be there. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. It's us letting go of Him.

Later on in Revelation He would say, "I stand at the door knocking. Whoever opens the door and lets Me in, I will come in and eat with him." And He makes this promise for all of those who remain, all of those who stand in the fire, all of those who are purified. He said:

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God." Revelation 2:7 (NLT)

This is the promise for those who will remain, you will experience a perfect paradise. The way He talks about it is, "I will give them fruit from the tree of life.

The tree of life was there with Adam and Eve in the garden. It's one they couldn't eat from because it meant that if they did they would live forever. But because of the first sin, it would have been tortuous for them to live without God for all of eternity, so He removed that option.

But He wasn't done. He sent His very own Son to live the perfect life, to be a true living sacrifice for me and you, paying the debt that we owed. Removing the distance from us. God, burning it all away.

And now, through that tree, the one that He hung on, the one He gave His life on, you and I are able to accept His invitation to return to our first love.

If you are here today and you've rejected this love, today is the day that you can accept it. If you're here today and you've never heard the gospel for what it is and you want to respond, you can. He is standing at the door and knocking. Anyone who welcomes Him will be received. Anyone who welcomes Him will be met with His unending, unfailing, out of this world, heavenly unstoppable love.

And for all of us, at all of our campuses what I just want to encourage you to do is stand to your feet. Stand to your feet. I want us to respond.

Not like you did in the beginning, I want you to respond like you want to respond for the rest of your life. I want you to respond like you're hearing it for the very first time. That Jesus is the most real thing to you.

I want us to respond with devotion and passion and love and fire. This is our moment. This is us standing on the altar, making the promise that we are coming back to be with God. And that His love is going to be what shapes us. We're going to release everything else and let it be burned.

So, if you could, just in a moment, just to symbolically show release would you just place your hands out in front of you? You don't have to raise them high, just right out in front of you, open handed, showing that you're going to release it and that you want to receive all that God has for you.

I'm going to pray and then we're going to worship one more time. Would you pray with us?

Father, we come before You today awakened, stirred, convicted, challenged, reminded of Your love, reminded of a love that can change anyone. A love that can meet anyone. And God, we hear Your call to return to that love. To come back to You. To do the things that we did in the beginning.

So, God, I pray that this is a moment in time where we feel the fire. God, when we feel the devotion. When we get back to our first love. But, God, not like last time. We remain. We realize that this is the safest place we could be.

God, I pray that we would get alone with You, in Your presence. And, God, I pray that You would just set us on fire completely consume us. Allow us to be living sacrifices on Your altar.



God, we trust you with everything we have. Give us a fire deep down in our bones that we are weary of holding in and we cannot. God, lead us in love and we will follow You.
Jesus, we love You. It's in Your precious and holy name we pray. Amen.

