

"FIRST LOVE"
SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON

- Say - Welcome to Sabbath School, let's bow our heads and ask God for understanding as we study today.
- Say - Prior to the observance of God's Spring Holy Days is a good time to re-valuate our relationship with God, our Creator. Everyone God calls can choose to make Him their closest friend, first in our heart, mind and soul, over all the temptations of this world! Just as He holds us "as the apple of His eye", so He wants to be our "First Love" forever.
- Say - Believe it or not, Christ reminisced about His "first love" with you. He said, "... I remember (you), the kindness (the zeal of love, faithfulness, goodness, how you desired Me) of your youth (when you first came into the truth), the love (the intimate desire to learn of Me, My ways, My laws) of thine espousals (your condition as a bride before your marriage), when (you) wentest after me (chose to follow Me) in the wilderness (for us, the world), in a land that was not sown (not living under God's laws spiritually speaking)" Jeremiah 2:2.
- Say - Christ continued as He reminisced, "Now when I passed by (you), and looked upon (you), behold, thy time was the time of love (still in your sins but you had come to the time of maturity when you heard and understood My "call"); and I spread my skirt over thee (I accepted you as in marriage/espousal then the remainder of the verse God explains what He means), and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant (agreement) with (you), saith the Lord God, and (you) becamest mine (Israel, the bride/wife of God's covenant at Sinai, Is. 54:5, Jer. 3:14, Hosea 2:19, 20 and for us His bride/wife, personally, at baptism) Ezekiel 16:8.
- Say - Continuing as Christ reminisced, "Then washed I (you) with water (repentance and baptism, purified us)...and I anointed thee with oil (gave us His spirit, His life)", Ez. 16:9. Now we were ready for the wedding garment which only Christ can provide and beautifully describes in Ezekiel 16:10-13.
- Say - Here is how He said it. "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin (the outer covering of the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God and symbolic of the nuptial tent of God and His bride. Now we are the "tabernacle" where Christ resides when we are His.), and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with

ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck (He gives us only the finest and most beautiful).

Say - "And I put a jewel on thy forehead and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God" Ez. 16:10-13.

Say - We can all remember when God called us and we began to walk with Him, no longer contrary to His ways, but for some the cares of the world crept back in once again and the temptations were overpowering and began to drift away. God speaks to us about leaving our "First Love".

Say - Here is how He said it, "Thus saith the LORD, what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me (Christ asks us what have I done wrong that you no longer put Me first, that you despise Me and reject Me and My teachings and Holy laws of love), and have walked after vanity (in contrast as to how you once followed only Me), and are become vain (empty)"?

Say - "Neither said they (no one stopped to think), where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt (and us out of the world of sin), that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits (symbolizing the resistance we went through from friends and family to follow Him), through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death (God redeemed us out of the darkness, of death and deception of false religions and brought us to His light/truth which gives life!!), through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt (you could not have made it without Me but now you've gone back to false, empty worship, false religion, why)"?

Say - "And I brought you into a plentiful country (as in a beautiful garden, for Israel this was the "Promised Land" but for us the "Promised Land" symbolizes the "Kingdom of God" on this earth which will be restored to the likes of the Garden of Eden in contrast to the barren wasteland of sin we once lived in before we knew Him), to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land (when you lost your "first love" and turned away from Me and polluted it with sin), and made mine

heritage (my possession) an abomination (by false worship, false religion, etc.)".

- Say - "The priests (pastors, ministers, etc who were and are to be feeding My sheep) said not (were not talking either because they were making their own religion and laws and changing Mine), Where is the LORD? And they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed (disobeyed Me) against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal (used their authority over My flock), and walked after things that do not profit (promising life but in actuality will bring death as in the "broadway")" Jeremiah 2:5-8.
- Say - In another place, God speaks to us through Timothy about leaving our "First love". He says, "Having damnation (a punishment for which one is sentenced), because they have cast off their "first faith". For some have already turned (gone back to the ways of the world) aside after Satan (the broad way which leads to death)" I Tim. 5:12, 15.
- Say - How do we get back on track and renew our "First Love"? God tells us how. "O Israel (My wife, My bride), return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity (sinfulness). Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, take away all iniquity (lawlessness), and receive us graciously (sincere repentance is the only way He is saying): I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.
- Say - "I will be as the dew unto Israel (He will surround us as the dew showing the "constancy" of His great love): he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon (produce fruits of God's spirit once again, Gal. 5)" Hosea 1.
- Say - Also, through Isaiah, God tells us how to renew our "First Love". "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near (there is a time coming called the "famine of the word" when we won't be able to): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" Isaiah 55:6-7.

Say - Through Jeremiah, God tells us, "Turn, O backsliding children (repent and return to the relationship we once had), saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family (one convert here, one convert there), and I will bring you to Zion (Jerusalem when He returns for His bride at the reward time or Day of the Lord). And I will give you pastors (shepherds over my flock) according to mine heart (which teach according to my laws of love, my ways), which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" Jer. 3:14, 15.

Say - Yes, God wants us to return to our "FIRST LOVE" and the "...joy of our salvation", Ps. 51:12. He wants us to restore, re-commit our lives to Him and renew our covenant/agreement which we made with Him at baptism. God wants us to return unto Him and worship HIM only with praise and thanksgiving for delivering and redeeming us, rescuing us out of darkness/death and bringing us into the light/truth/"Path of Life" revealed to us by His Holy Days! "Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness", Ps. 30:4

Say - God wants to know that "He is the "LORD our God", there is no other. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing (complete change for the better) of your mind, that ye may prove (scrutinize, examine,) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God", Romans 12:1-2.

Say - Then we can pray as David did, "Create in me a clean heart, O God (it is a life-time process); and renew a right spirit within me (if we don't "transform", He will take it from us). Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation (OUR FIRST LOVE); and uphold me with thy free (generous) spirit. Why? Then will I teach transgressors (those disobedient to God) thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee", Ps. 51:1-13.

MEMORY VERSE

".....because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from where (the source, Jesus Christ) thou art fallen (from the divine promise of salvation), and repent (return to Him and He will return to you), and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent". Revelation 2:4-5

BELOW IS THE SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON FOR TOTS

FIRST LOVE

GOD IS THE "FIRST LOVE" IN MY HEART
AND MIND AND SOUL; HE IS NUMBER
ONE TO ME;
A TRUSTING FRIEND HE ALWAYS IS AND,
FOR ME, THERE'S NO OTHER GOD
YOU SEE.

FOLLOWING HIM, I LEARN OF HIS LOVE;
KIND AND GENTLE TO ALL IS HIS
WAY;
LEAVE HIM OR HURT HIM I WOULD
NEVER, I WILL THINK AND TALK WITH
HIM DAY AFTER DAY.

HE IS THE ONE WHO GIVES ME LIFE FOR
HIS SPIRIT DWELLS IN ME;
AND EVEN FROM A "TINY TOT", I HOPE TO
ALL MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS,
THROUGH ME, HIS KINDNESS IS
WHAT THEY SEE. BY B. R. B

PLEASE FIND AN APPROPRIATE PICTURE TO COMPLIMENT THE LESSON OR MEMORY VERSE. BELOW ARE THE MEMORY VERSES TO BE CUT OUT AND PLACED WITH THE APPROPRIATE PICTURE FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL NOTEBOOK.

MEMORY VERSE

"... because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent".

Revelation 2:4-5

MEMORY VERSE FOR TOTS

MEMORY VERSE

"... because thou hast left thy first love... repent"...

Rev. 2:4-5