

XXXIX

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Leader Conversation Guide – XXXIX: The Return - Part 2

Main Idea

This week, Pastor Jeff jumped back into our mini-series, “The Return,” by focusing on one of the most breathtaking and intimate truths in all of Scripture: Jesus is the Bridegroom, and we, the Church, are His Bride. This message draws our attention to the beautiful reality that the end of the story is not just Christ’s return in power and glory, but His return for us. His return for those He deeply loves and has prepared to be united with Him forever. The Kingdom of God is both “now and not yet,” and as we live in the tension between Jesus’ first and second coming, we are invited to live as a people passionately in love with our Savior.

This isn’t about religion, performance, or striving—it’s about returning to our first love. Jesus is not calling us to be merely good Christians, but to be a devoted Bride, captivated by His beauty, faithful to His Word, and watchful for His return. As we begin our discussion today, let’s reflect on the love of Jesus, the longing of His heart, and what it means for us to live in anticipation of His coming—not with fear or apathy, but with joy, purity, and obedience.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready. REVELATION 19:7

Make It Practical

Jesus is the Bridegroom, and we are His Bride

- The Bible reveals a divine love story. Jesus is returning not just as King, but as the Bridegroom passionately in love with His Church. Our identity is not rooted in religious performance, but in our relationship with Him.
- John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-8

Fall in love with Jesus—Behold and Obey

- Love for Jesus is cultivated by fixing our eyes on Him, meditating on His Word, talking with Him throughout the day, and living in joyful obedience. Obedience flows from love, not obligation.
- Psalm 27:4; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:21; Ephesians 5:2

Stay ready and don’t drift from your first love

- We must live alert, not careless. Holding fast to the truth, enduring in love, and continually returning to Jesus as our first love. His return is near, and He is coming for a pure and prepared Bride.
- Hebrews 2:1; Revelation 2:4-5; 1 John 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:8

Talk About It

What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is described as the Bridegroom and the Church as His Bride?

- How does this change the way you view your relationship with Him?

In what ways can we actively “behold” Jesus in our daily lives?

- What helps you keep your eyes fixed on Him and cultivate a deeper love for Him?

Have you ever found yourself drifting from your first love?

- What practical steps can you take to return to a place of wholehearted devotion and readiness for His return?

Don't try to be a good Christian—be a Bride.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the incredible love You have shown us through Jesus, our Bridegroom. Stir our hearts with a deeper longing for You. Help us to behold Your beauty, walk in obedience, and remain faithful as we wait for Your return. Rekindle our first love, and make us ready—pure, devoted, and watchful. May our lives reflect the love and glory of Christ in all we do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Next Steps

Set aside daily time to behold Jesus in the Word and in prayer.

- Focus not just on learning, but on loving—letting your heart be stirred by His beauty and truth.

Take inventory of your obedience.

- Ask yourself: Am I living out His Word as an overflow of love? Choose one area where you can respond in greater faithfulness this week.

Return to your first love.

- If you've grown spiritually distant or distracted, take intentional steps to rekindle intimacy with Jesus, through worship, repentance, and renewed devotion.