“FIRST” SERIES – PART 4

**Text: Ezekiel 16:8-14**

The story of our redemption is a love story. Redemption is an act of God’s passionate love toward us. Just like any great love story, this one is also described here in Ezequiel in poetic tones full of beautiful symbolism.

1. **Remembering the love story of our redemption**

God describes here the time of the ‘first love’: *“When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love”.* He puts us in remembrance of what He did for us:

1. **He covered our sins**

8b “*so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness”*

Nakedness is symbolic of our fallen state. Adam and Eve realised their nakedness after they fell. They fell short of the glory of God. That is how God found us: we were fallen. Here’s what He did: He covered our nakedness – Jesus accounted for our fallen state and His blood covered all our shame and our sin.

[***Romans 4:7***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4:7&version=NKJV)***:*** *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;*

Also, the passage says, “*I spread my wing over you*”. That is an expression symbolic of marriage. We found that same expression in Ruth 3:9 when she addresses Boaz.

1. **He brought us into covenant**

That is why we read in the next portion of the verse:

*“Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,” says the Lord God”.*

We entered into a sacred covenant with Jesus and we became His (“*You became mine*”):

**Isaiah 43:1-2**

*But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine.* ***2****When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.*

**1 John 4:4** - *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

1. **As the perfect Husband, Jesus beautified us, His bride:**

***9****“Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil.****10****I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

*“I washed you in water”*

**Ephesians 5:25-27** - **25***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,****26****that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,* **27***that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

*‘and I anointed you with oil”*

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. He anointed us with the Holy Spirit. In those days, a bride to be presented to a king had 12 months of preparation (like in the story of Esther). Part of that preparation was the smearing of different types of oils.

***10****I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

*“Sandals of badger skin”*

Badger skin was the same material that covered the tabernacle (Ex. 25:5, 26:14). God made us to walk in His presence!

*“I clothed you with fine linen”*

Fine linen in the Bible is always symbolic of purity.

***11*** *I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck.****12****And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.*

*“A jewel on your nose”*

Jewel here is symbolic of promise. Isaac gave Rebecca a jewel for her nose as a promise. God has given us His promises. They are yes and amen.

*“A beautiful crown on your head”*

There are at least 6 promises in the NT regarding the crown that is waiting for us when we meet Jesus. He made us royalty, kings and priests unto our God! – all because of His great love with which He loved us!

***13****Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty.****14****Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendour which I had bestowed on you,” says the Lord God.*

*“You were exceedingly beautiful and succeed to royalty”*

This is how God made us in His sight: a beautiful bride who became royalty.

*“perfect through My splendour”*

‘Splendour’ is a reference to the glory of God.

[**2 Corinthians 3:18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+3%3A18&version=NKJV)  - *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

This is the love story of our redemption – He found us unworthy, naked and unqualified but he changed us, cleansed us, qualified us and made something beautiful in our lives. The passage starts by saying “your time was the time of love” – the time of first love.

Let us now read verses **15-16:**

***15****“But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it.****16****You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. Such things should not happen, nor be.*

1. **How to respond appropriately to His love**

What a contrast between the ‘time of love” mentioned in verse 8 and the description of Jerusalem turning their back on that first love, as described in verses 15-16.

Those two verses describe the condition of someone who not only disengaged emotionally from God but transferred their affection to other things, someone who failed to remember the love story of their redemption.

***‘such things should not happen nor be’!***

It should never happen that someone stopped loving God, that someone stopped appreciating what they have received in Jesus, that someone stopped valuing their covenant with God, that the presence of God should be of so little interest them, that God would no longer be first.

This passage expresses the dismay of God when His great love is met with great indifference – much like in the passage we looked at last week, when Jesus spoke of his disappointment for the fact that the Ephesians had lost their first love. **Let that never be a description of our spiritual condition,**

Let us respond to the love of God, with our utmost affection and passion,

Let us remember what He has done for us,

Let us return to our FIRST LOVE!