

**REturn (part 2)
Pastor Bill Bowers
January 8, 2017**

Today's Big Idea: *All of us are prone to wander, so we need to return to the Lord. Life is a series of returns, of constant corrections back to Jesus.*

1. Ways we wander.

We all have wandered away like sheep; each of us has gone his own way.
Isaiah 53:6

See Luke 15

We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. Hebrews 2:1

2. God's plea: "Return to Me!"

I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist.
Return to Me, for I have redeemed you. Isaiah 44:22

Go, proclaim this message toward the north: "Return, faithless people," declares the Lord. "I will frown on you no longer, for I am faithful," declares the Lord. "I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt—You have rebelled against the Lord your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods, and have not obeyed Me," declares the Lord. "Return, faithless people," declares the Lord, "for I am your husband." Jeremiah 3:12-14

"Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding." Jeremiah 3:22

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.
Lamentations 3:40

Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. Hosea 6:1

Return to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and **return to the Lord**. Say to Him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips." Hosea 14:1-2

"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity. Joel 2:12-13

See also Malachi 3:7 and Zechariah 1:3

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LifeGroup and Personal Study Questions

- Pastor Bill shared the “big idea” for this week’s teaching that “All of us are prone to wander, so we need to return to the Lord. Life is a series of returns, of constant corrections back to Jesus.” Consider what “wandering” looks like in your life. Does wandering specifically equate to “sin-type” activities? How would you describe wandering in your life?
- Isaiah 53:6 describes “wandering” as going one’s own way. What does “going your own way” look like to you? Considering a “week in your life,” are there times that you are more prone to go your own way? What triggers or reasons compel you to go your own way? How can you be more faithful and intentional to follow the way of God for your life? Try to be as specific as possible with your answers.
- Pastor Bill listed three specific ways we can “go our own way.” Evaluating your past and your current state of life, list (if any) the things you might be in open rebellion with God...where you are in quiet neglect...what things might cause you to “drift” from God’s way. How do you feel about your list? Are you compelled to make a change to correct these course distractions? What change(s) do you intend to make? Who will help you stay on course?
- We heard that idolatry can be a major issue in the cause of wandering. How would you describe and define idolatry? Are you guilty of putting things ahead of your relationship with God? What things do you prioritize over the development of your relationship with God? What things do you prioritize over the development of your relationship with Jesus? How are you intentionally developing your life with God so you become more like Jesus? Do you invest yourself more earnestly in other areas than you do in your own discipleship (consider your family, hobbies, occupation/vocation, other areas of personal development)? Do you think this is an unreasonable way of looking at your faith? Please explain your answers.
- This can be a very convicting conversation. What or how are you feeling about it? Angry? Disturbed? Wanting to avoid talking about it? Wanting to change things? Wanting to RETURN? How will you respond?

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