

**General Topics :: Love me where you're at.. Francis Frangipane****Love me where you're at.. Francis Frangipane - posted by EAGLEFLYING (), on: 2019/9/13 19:04**

Love Me Where You're At
(En Espa ol)

I have discovered that, as we seek the Lord, our most difficult periods can be transformed into wonderful breakthroughs into God's love. For me one such season occurred during the years 1979 to 1981. The association of churches with which I was aligned had fallen under spiritual deception. Not only were its core doctrines increasingly seeded with New Age influences, but also immorality crept in, and key leaders began leaving their wives for other women. I could no longer remain silent. As a result, in 1979 I left my congregation in Detroit, Michigan, where I had served as pastor, and traveled to the organization's regional headquarters in Iowa. I came to plead for repentance. However, after meeting with the senior leaders, I was asked to leave the group.

So here we were -- we had left our church, we had no money, and we had four little children; we couldn't even afford basic housing. Desperate for anything, we finally found an old farmhouse in rural Washington, Iowa. The home was over a hundred years old, but it actually looked much older. After negotiating with the landlord, we were given a year of free rent provided I did basic repairs to the house, such as cleaning and painting.

Even so, the house needed more than I could provide. The furnace did not work well, so we installed a wood burner stove in the kitchen. That first winter, it turned out, was one of the coldest in Iowa's history. Frost formed on the inside walls, spreading a foot or two around each window; wind chills dropped to sixty below, and even colder on several occasions.

To keep warm each night, the whole family cuddled tightly on one large mattress on the dining room floor, about eighteen feet from the wood burner in the kitchen. A fan behind the stove nudged warm air in our direction. My nightly project, of course, was to build enough heat in the stove to keep us warm until morning.

While I worked the fire, I also would pray and seek God. The wood burner became a kind of altar to me, for each night as I prayed, I offered to God my unfulfilled dreams and the pain of my spiritual isolation. Yes, I knew the Lord was aware of our situation. Though we had virtually nothing, He showed Himself to us in dozens of little ways. I just didn't know what He wanted of me.

As the seasons came and went, another child was born, and then we fostered a young girl from Vietnam, giving us six children. Still, as the family grew, the little area around the wood burner became a hallowed place to me. Even in the summer I would sit on the chair next to the stove and pray and worship.

I would like to say I found the joy of the Lord during this time, but in truth, though I gradually adjusted to my situation, I felt an abiding misery in my soul. Our deep poverty was an issue (I barely made \$6,000 a year), but more than that, I felt like I had missed the Lord. My continual prayer was, "Lord, what do You want of me?"

Three years of seeking God passed, and I still carried an emptiness inside. What was God's will for me? I had started a couple Bible studies and spoken a few times in churches, but I so identified with being a pastor that, until I was engaged again in full-time ministry, I feared I had lost touch with God's call on my life.

In spite of this inner emptiness concerning ministry, I actually was growing spiritually, especially in areas that were previously untilled. I went through the Gospels, hungry to study and obey the words of Christ. Previously, I had unconsciously defined a successful ministry as something born of my performance. During this time, however, the Lord reduced me to simply being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, a number of things I thought were biblical I discovered were really just religious traditions. The Lord desired that I take inventory of my heart and examine those few truths for which I would be willing to die. He said the truths for which I would die, for these I should live.

Frankly, things like the timing of the Rapture or nuances about worship style or spiritual gifts dropped in their priority, though I still considered them important. Rising to the top of my focus was a passion to be a true follower of Jesus Christ --

to obey His teachings and approach life not merely as a critic but more as an encourager. I also found myself increasingly free to enjoy and learn from Christians from other streams and perspectives.

Yet these changes, though deep and lasting, occurred slowly, almost imperceptibly. They were happening quietly in my heart, and only in hindsight did I see what the Lord had done. Throughout this time I was preoccupied with feelings of detachment from God's will. My prayer to know the Lord's plan for me continued daily.

The Breakthrough

One day, as I stood in the kitchen pantry, I repeated again my abiding prayer: "Lord, what do You want of me?" In a sudden flash of illumination, the Lord answered. Speaking directly to my heart, He said, "Love Me where you're at."

In this time and season, remember, I was not a pastor or minister. I was a television repairman doing odd jobs on the side to provide for my family. I hated what I was doing. In my previous church I had taught against TV, and now I was "laying hands" on television sets and raising them from the dead! The Lord's answer cut straight to my heart. I was awed at its simplicity! I asked, "Love You where I am at? Lord, is that all You want of me?" To this He responded, "This is all I will ever require of you."

In that eternal moment, peace flooded my soul, and I was released from the false expectation of ministry-driven service. God was not looking at what I did for Him, but He was looking at who I became to Him in love. The issue in His heart was not whether I pastored but whether I loved Him. To love the Lord in whatever station I found myself -- even as a television repairman -- this I could do!

A deep and remarkable transformation occurred in me. My identity was no longer in being a pastor but rather in becoming a true lover of God. Having settled my priorities, amazingly, just a couple days later I was invited to pastor a church in Marion, Iowa. In spite of all my previous anxiety about returning to ministry, I did not jump at the opportunity. For I had found what the Lord truly desired of me. Though I eventually accepted this call, my focus was not merely on leading a church but on loving God.

What God Seeks

More than one's ministry, God seeks our love. His great commandment is that we love Him, ultimately, with all our mind, all our heart, and all our soul and strength. If we love Him, we will fulfill all He requires of us (John 14:15). And it is as we love Him that He orchestrates all things to work together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Beloved, loving God is not hard. We can fulfill any assignment -- auto mechanic or housewife, doctor or college student -- and still give great pleasure to our heavenly Father. We do not need ministry titles to love the Lord. Indeed, God measures the value of our lives by the depth of our love. This is what He requires of all true God-seekers: to love Him where we are at.

Lord Jesus, the revelation of Your love has swept me off my feet. Lord, You have drawn me and I run after You. Master, even in the mundane things of life, I shall express my love for You. Consume me in Your love.

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Adapted from Francis Frangipane's book, *I Will Be Found by You*,