

**“Seek the Lord while he can be found.”** There once was a woman who got married when she was very young. She married her childhood sweetheart, the **only** boy she had ever dated, the **only** boy she had ever kissed. But as she got older, her eyes and her heart started to **wander**. She started to become aware that there were **other** boys, other men out there. And they seemed more **fun**, more **daring**, more **exciting** than her all too familiar husband. She had never tested the waters before getting married, she hadn’t seen what other options were out there, she had only known her husband. She wondered if she had made a **mistake** by getting married so young. She wondered if life was better and more interesting elsewhere. So she **left** her husband. She wasn’t feeling **“in love”** anymore, so she divorced her husband and walked away from their marriage.

The woman went to bars and out on dates, and fell for many other lovers. But these lovers kept coming and going. They always seemed very exciting to her, initially, but they all ended up being very **selfish**. She quickly started to feel **used** and taken advantage of. These new lovers would make bold **promises**, but they never followed through on anything. They **hurt** her. They **manipulated** her. They **controlled** her. They **abused** her. They used her and tossed her aside—one after another. The revolving door of lovers was beating her down.

Eventually she got **older** and her beauty faded. She was worn out and **exhausted**, used and abused by all her failed lovers. None of them had **stayed** with her, none were interested in **committing** to her, none really wanted to **take care** of her. They took whatever they wanted from her and then left the moment they had what they wanted. She found herself all alone and **abandoned**. In that dark place, she began to **remember** her husband, her childhood love. The one she had left and abandoned. She hadn’t seen him in years and wondered how he was doing. She thought about reaching out to him, but she was too **embarrassed** by the mess she had made of their marriage and her own life.

And then one day, she received a phone call. When she heard the voice on the other end, she almost **passed out**. She hadn’t heard that voice in years. But she would never forget it. It was the **loving** and **kind** voice of her rightful husband. During all the years she had wandered, he had been **waiting** on her. He had **never** taken another lover. He had eyes and a heart only for her. And he was calling, because he wanted her to come back home, to **come back** to the marriage she had abandoned decades before. He would **forgive** her, all of her past would be wiped clean. They could have a fresh start. Her husband had let her go when she had insisted on leaving, but now he was calling her back home. This was her chance to find **repentance** and **reconciliation**—he might not offer her this chance again.

This story is nothing more than the Biblical story. The Creator made his creation, the cosmos, to be his **bride**. As the prophet Isaiah says, **“Your Creator is your husband.”** But in her youth, the cosmos wandered from the Creator, looking to other lovers. The cosmos did not give her whole self to the Creator, she shared her heart and body with the seductive false lovers of **arrogance**, **fear**, and **violence**. But these lovers always failed her, leaving her abused, broken, and abandoned. But the Creator was always waiting in the wings, even when it didn’t seem like it, saying, **“Even though the mountains are overthrown, my unfailing love for you will not be shaken.”**

The Creator’s love for the cosmos that he had created never failed, never went away. The Creator did hide his face from the cosmos when the cosmos insisted on prostituting itself with other lovers. But even while he hid his face, the Creator was always patiently waiting till the cosmos would be ready to come home to him, saying, **“I hid my face for a moment, but I will have compassion on you.”** As the cosmos bottomed out in its pursuit of the ways of **arrogance**, **fear**, and **violence**, the Creator called his creation back to himself, saying, **“I will call you back like a wife abandoned and rejected.”** The Creator offers the cosmos, his creation, a fresh start, saying, **“You will forget the shame of your youth and your adultery.”**

Therefore the prophet Isaiah calls out to all humans, urging us to lead the charge and to lead all the cosmos back home to our Creator, saying, **“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near.”** We humans have been incredibly guilty in leading the cosmos away from the Creator. We are an essential part of the wandering, unfaithful, and adulterous bride of the Creator. We have **wandered** from the Creator to seek after the false lovers of **arrogance**, **fear**, and **violence**. We have tried to find **comfort** and **pleasure** in the arms of cities and governments. We have tried to find **protection** in the arms of militaries and weapons. We have tried to find **security** in the arms of wealth and money. We have had a revolving door of lovers—one after another. We have indulged our wandering eyes, thinking there is someplace else that is better than living by **faith**, **hope**, and **love** in the Creator.

But these false lovers have failed us at every turn. They use us and abuse us. They manipulate us and control us. They destroy our bodies and souls—they have wounded and damaged the cosmos. But the Creator has not given up on us. He is ready and willing to forgive us for our adulterous ways, for running after false husbands and lovers. The Creator says to us, **“Come, all who are thirsty! Even though you have no money, come and eat!”** He begs us to look at our lives and honestly assess the messes we have made of everything around us. The Creator urges us to see that we are pursuing and working for things that do not and will not ever satisfy, saying, **“Why spend money on what is not bread? Why labor for what does not satisfy?”** Our false lovers of cities, weapons, money, technologies, and governments are all dead ends. There is nothing in them that can make us healthy and whole. Our false lovers are not saving us, they are destroying the cosmos. And the Creator comes to us and offers us what is truly good, saying, **“Listen! Listen to me and eat what is good and your soul will be fed! Come to me and listen and your soul will live!”** The Creator’s arms are the only place we will ever find true security, comfort, and protection. He says to us, **“With me, you have nothing to fear...No weapon will prevail against you.”**

**“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near.”** Unfortunately, we are scared and terrified of admitting our **failings**, admitting our **mistakes**, admitting we have **prostituted** our bodies and souls with dozens of false lovers. But the Creator urges us today to step out of our selfish lives and to **come back home** to him. He says to us, **“Do not be afraid.”** There is nothing to fear as we step out of the darkness and into the light. The Creator’s judgment will not destroy us, it will **save** us. The Creator is here among us, calling us back home into his arms. **“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near.”** The Creator is urging you to leave your false lovers behind and offer all of your mind, heart, body, and soul to him again. Today is the day of your **salvation**, today is the time of your **repentance**. **“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near.”** Today is your chance to be forgiven of all your adulterous ways. Today is your chance to repent. Today is your chance to come back home. As Isaiah says, **“Abandon your selfish ways and your harmful thoughts. Turn to the Lord and find mercy.”** So listen, today! Pay attention, right now! Do not harden your heart! Your Creator is calling you back home to live with him. **“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near.” Amen.**