

Journey Through the Bible

A New Heart and a New Spirit

Message 7: A NEW HEART (4): Loving the Lord from Our Whole Heart

Outline:

- I. **"You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength"—Mark 12:30:**
 - A. The function of the heart is to love the Lord; it is the loving organ of our being—v. 30:
 1. God desires that man would love Him and seek after Him—Gen. 2:18, footnote 1.
 2. The purpose of our heart in God's intention is that it may love Him.
 - B. All spiritual experiences start with love in the heart; if we do not love the Lord, it is impossible to receive any kind of spiritual experience—1 Cor. 2:9, footnote 3.
 - C. From the day we believed in the Lord Jesus, the love of God has been poured out in our hearts; hence, the heart of every Christian is a heart of love—Rom. 5:5; cf. Ezek. 36:26.
 - D. Whether there would be a day of glory in the church's victory or grievous days of the church's decline depends altogether on what kind of lovers we are—2 Tim. 3:2, footnote 2; Rev. 2:4, footnote 2; v. 7, footnote 6.
- II. **Life is a person, Christ Himself, and there is no other way to apply and enjoy this person but by love—John 14:6, 21, 23; 1 Tim. 1:14:**
 - A. Many Christians have been distracted by trying to do something for the Lord; this is because Satan in his subtlety would like to distract us from the very center of our being; we need to forget about outward correction, outward improvement, and outward activity, and always pay our full attention to the inner part of our being where Jesus is—Rev. 2:1-4:
 1. When we say, "Lord Jesus, I love You," we have a sweet sense within us and we afford Him more space within our being; He will spread Himself in our being and saturate us with all that He is, with all His riches—John 14:23.
 2. If we do this day and night, we will be thoroughly saturated with Jesus—Gal. 1:16a; 2:20a; 4:19; Eph. 3:17a.
 - B. Today in this generation the Lord Jesus does not need many young people to work for Him; He needs many young ones to love Him desperately:
 1. All the young brothers and sisters should pray, "Lord Jesus, cause me to love You; show me Your loveliness, Your beauty, Your fairness, and Your sweetness"; to all our senses nothing should be so sweet, so precious, so attractive, and so amazing as Jesus.
 2. If all the young people would be wrecked by the loveliness of Christ, this would affect the entire nation.
- III. **The Song of Songs is a marvelous and vivid portrait, in poetic form, of the bridal love between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as the bride—S.S. 1:1, footnote 1:**
 - A. Song of Songs stresses not the Body of Christ corporately but the believer in Christ individually, unveiling the progressive experience of an individual believer's loving fellowship with Christ; without the individual fellowship

with the Lord as a base, we cannot have the proper Body life— vv. 2-4, 7-8; 2:4; 6:4, footnote 1.

- B. According to Song of Songs, our relationship with the Lord should be very romantic—1:2-4; 2:5-6; 4:9-10; 7:10-12; 8:1-3:
- C. According to Song of Songs, we need to have a personal and affectionate relationship with Christ—1:2-4; cf. John 13:23; Psa. 2:12:
 - 1. God works in a personal and affectionate way, not in the way of a movement—Matt. 4:18-20; Mark 16:7; John 21:15-22.
 - 2. After you have received Christ as your life, you must have a very personal seeking after Christ; no one can represent you in this matter—Phil. 3:7-14.
 - 3. We need to be attracted by Christ's love, charmed by His name, and captivated by His person to pursue Him for satisfaction—S.S. 1:2-4a.

Focus: "Give yourself to love the Lord. No other way is so prevailing, and no other way is so safe, so rich, and so full of enjoyment. Just love Him. Do not care for anything else. We must continually tell the Lord, 'Lord, keep me in Your love! Attract me with Yourself! Keep me all the time in Your loving presence!' If we will pray in this way, we will see what love we will have toward the Lord and what kind of life we will live. We will simply live by the Lord Himself. As long as we love Him from the deepest part of our being, everything will be all right"

READING EXCERPT

ENJOY BY LOVING

Life is a person, and there is no other way to apply and enjoy this person but by love. We need to love Him. Some of the saints in past centuries used to pray, "Lord, show me Your love that I may love You." We need to pray the same prayer. Once we see the love of Jesus, we will be so constrained, so captured, and so attracted. We will spontaneously love Him. Then by loving Him, we will enjoy Him. This is life, and since this life is a person, there is no other way for us to experience Him but by love. Only by loving Jesus can we enjoy Him.

If I want to enjoy a brother, I must love that brother. The more I love him, the more I enjoy him. The Lord Jesus is not a doctrine; He is not a set of gifts or a power; He is a person who needs our love, our appreciation, and our affection. How we need the sweet affection and love toward the Lord Jesus!

Many Christians today hold the teachings but are so cold toward the Lord. They have all the doctrines, the dispensations, the prophecies, and the types. Some even have doctor's degrees in divine teachings, yet they are so cold toward the Lord Jesus. We can deal with teachings in this way, but we cannot deal with this person in a cold way. We can exercise our mind to deal with all the doctrines, and yet our heart remains cold. If we are going to deal with this person, we must have a hot and loving heart, a heart so full of affection that we would contact Him all the time. One book among the sixty-six books of the Bible, the Song of Songs, illustrates how the Lord Jesus is altogether lovely. This book shows how the Lord is so attractive and how we are those who love Him. We just love Him! Could you love some doctrine in this way? I do not believe that you could even love the gifts in this way. Do you love the gifts? Could you say, "O dear gifts, you are altogether lovely! Oh, the healing! Oh, the speaking in tongues! All the gifts are so sweet!?" Just try to speak in this way. It simply does not fit. But we can say a thousand times, "Lord Jesus, You are altogether lovely! O Lord Jesus, You are altogether lovely!"

We may talk about Christ being our life, but if we do not have the real love toward Him, He is only life to us in doctrine. We just have the doctrine of Christ as life; we do not have the enjoyment of Him as life. If we would enjoy Jesus as life, we must love Him. As long as we love Him, even if we do not know the term life, we will enjoy life. We will not know a doctrine, but we will enjoy Jesus, a living person, as our very life.

THE NEED FOR A PERSONAL AND AFFECTIONATE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

Dear saints, in this chapter I want to impress you with something particular. After you have received Christ as your life, you must have a very personal seeking after Christ. No one can represent you or do anything for you in this matter. It must be personal. Every believer's relationship with Christ must be personal and affectionate.

In these days I feel very much that there is a warm, intimate, close affection between me and my God. The seeker said, "Draw me." She did not say, "Draw us." Draw me is personal. We want a drawing from the Lord that is His personal and affectionate doing. We want Him to be with us in a personal and affectionate way. All the religions, including Christianity, present a portrait of God that is inaccurate. They portray God merely as great, almighty, sovereign, majestic, and even unapproachable; no one can or even dares to touch God. To say that God is majestic is not wrong, but that is only one attribute of the Divine Being. Regardless of how great, sovereign, almighty, and majestic God is, when He wanted to build up His relationship with man, He took the personal, affectionate way. He took the way of becoming a man. If the Lord Jesus had come to Peter in a majestic way, Peter would have felt threatened. But He did not come to Peter as the majestic, untouchable God. Instead, He came to Peter as his countryman. Peter was a Galilean, and Jesus was also a Galilean. This is personal and affectionate.

The apostle John could recline on the Lord's bosom (John 13:23). How personal and affectionate that was! The very God, the very Lord whom we seek, sets up a feast and invites us to feast with Him (Rev. 3:20). We must have such a personal and affectionate contact with Him. If we mail someone a letter, that affects him in a certain way. But if we come to him with a personal visitation and an affectionate contact, that makes a great difference.

Hymns, #437 (stanzas 1 and 6 with the chorus)

Only the face of tears that Peter saw, only the face of glory into which Stephen looked, and only the heart that wept with Mary can keep us away from the idols, the attractions, of this world. The Bible tells us that Jesus wept with Mary (John 11:35). Have you ever heard that God weeps? Many say that Jesus came to express God, but they mainly refer to the miracles that He did, not to the tears that He shed.

Dear saints, my burden in this chapter is to share that you have to start seeking the Lord in a personal and affectionate way. I want to stress these two words: personal and affectionate. The very God whom we pursue is personal and affectionate.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the doctrine of Christ as life and enjoying Christ as life?
2. Can you think of an example when Jesus was personal and affectionate to someone in the Bible? What did it accomplish?

Scripture Reading:

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

1 Tim. 1:14 And the grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

S.S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.

S.S. 1:3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.

S.S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you--The king has brought me into his chambers--/ We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love you.

2 Cor. 11:2-3 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.