

Session 7 Jesus, a Bridegroom with a Burning Heart of Love (Pt. 2)

I. REVIEW FROM SESSION 6

- A. Paul prayed that we would understand and experience Jesus' love (2 Thes. 3:5).

⁵May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. (2 Thes. 3:5)

⁹...this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment... (Phil. 1:9)

- B. The nature of God is love. Love, by definition, is relational. We can only properly understand God's eternal purposes and how He views us in the context of a "relational paradigm of God." The nature of God's kingdom is love—being in deep relationship and partnership with Jesus.

¹⁶God is love and he who abides in [lives in] love abides in God. (1 Jn. 4:16)

- C. God dwells forever in a deeply satisfying relationship of love in the fellowship of the Trinity. The Son loves the Father, and the Father loves the Son (Jn. 3:35; 5:20; 14:31). They deeply delight in using their authority to serve and honor each other freely (Jn. 5:23; 8:49-54; 12:26; 13:31-32; 14:12; 17:1, 4-5, 22, 24). Each is equally yoked in mutual love and wholehearted commitment. They are each fully involved, fully focused, and fully committed to one another.

²⁰The Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself does... (Jn. 5:20)

³¹...I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. (Jn. 14:31)

- D. Love is God's eternal nature and personality. It is not something He does—it is something that He is. **He is an eternal, overflowing fountain of desire for His people.** Desire implies want, but not lack. God desires to share the joy of His love. Love must have an expression to be love.

- E. Jesus' love and desire for us is **infinite in measure** and **eternal in duration**. He always loves effortlessly and fully. He never grows in love, neither does He diminish in love when He gives it away. His love is sustained forever with intensity, like a volcanic explosion of holy desire.

- F. We were created in God's likeness for the purpose of relating to God. He designed the human spirit for partnership with Himself because He had plans to share so much with us forever.

²⁶God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness ..." (Gen. 1:26)

1. We were created in God's image to be loved and to love. The capacity to love deeply is unique to the human spirit because only we are created in the image of the God who is love.
2. The reason we enjoy being loved and loving is because we were made in God's image.

3. God created the human spirit with a longing for the assurance that God enjoys us as well as for deep partnership with God. These cravings were strategically given to us by God. They will never leave. See: **7 Longings of the Human Heart** by M. Bickle & D. Hiebert.

G. God loves us in the way that God loves God (Jn. 15:9; 17:23). This foundational truth gives us insight into the nature of God and His kingdom. Jesus feels the same intensity of love for us that the Father feels for Him. The Father has delighted in His fellowship with Jesus from all eternity.

⁹As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. (Jn. 15:9)

²⁶...I will declare it [Father's name], that the love with which You loved Me may be in them..." (Jn. 17:26)

1. Love finds pleasure in others and in relating to them. When we love somebody, we want them to feel loved. By the very nature of love, Jesus desires a deep relationship with us.
2. Jesus' desire is to make us **feel loved**. He desires us to **celebrate** our dignity and value. He finds **pleasure** in us, in **sharing** His heart with us, and in **relating** to us in a deep way. He wants to **partner** with us in the work that His Father has entrusted to Him.
3. **Abide in My love**: This speaks of "living" in God's love—this includes making God's love the thing that we talk to God about most often (even more than our opportunities and difficulties) and that we diligently set our heart to learn about and search out.

a. Take time to **thank Jesus** for loving you the way the Father loves Him.

b. Ask the Spirit to **reveal God's love for you** and to **impart love for God in you** more.

4. Express your adoration and commitment to give your all to Jesus—do this with affection, gratitude, and the confidence that He receives our love and that it moves Him.
5. The grace to receive God's love and express love to God is the greatest gift the Spirit imparts (Rom. 5:5). It "takes God to love God."

⁵...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)

6. Ask the Spirit to teach and inspire you to grow in God's love—to **understand His love for you** and to **impart love in you for God** that **overflows in loving others**.

⁹...I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge... (Phil. 1:9)

H. God's plan is for love to abound on earth forever. Love is more than just a key thread in the tapestry of the salvation story. It is the chief aim of God's storyline that He communicated to Abraham, Moses, David, and all the prophets. It is the fulfillment of the law and prophets.

⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (Mt. 22:40)

I. Love is the greatest virtue, our greatest response to God, and the core message of the kingdom. Loving relationship with God is foundational to every aspect of the kingdom. It is the primary grid through which we define theology, salvation, justice, the Great Commission, the glory of God, the supremacy of Jesus, eternal rewards, the millennial kingdom, judgment, the Body of Christ, worship, intercession, holiness, humility, faith, family life, prosperity, leadership, etc.

13Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

J. The Spirit's agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in the Church forever.

37You shall love the Lord...38This is the first and great commandment. (Mt. 22:37-38)

K. We are a great part of Jesus' story. The very existence of a Bride, equally yoked in voluntary love, filling the earth, is a significant part of His glory and supremacy being manifested before all. We are the work of His hands (Eph. 2:10). One way He wants to be known is in us and through us.

L. Salvation restores our fellowship with the Trinity and the partnership that God wanted with us in Eden. Jesus, the last Adam, will be with His Bride in the garden, walking with the Father.

M. How we view God matters. Many see Jesus as if He were a great yet distant king whose primary interest in us is to save us so that we will praise Him and work for Him.

N. In His High Priestly prayer, Jesus prayed that the Body of Christ would enter into deep participation with the fellowship of the Trinity as the way to transform the world.

23I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me. (Jn. 17:23)

O. Eternal participation with the indwelling Christ by being rooted and grounded in God's love which far exceeds human knowledge is the only way to experience the fullness of God's purposes.

17That Christ may dwell in your hearts...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18may be able to comprehend...the width and length and depth and height—19to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:17-19)

II. JESUS THE BRIDEGROOM: GOD OF DESIRE AND RELATIONSHIP

A. Scripture calls the Lord our *husband* (Isa. 45:5; Jer. 31:32; Hos. 2:16); Jesus called Himself the *Bridegroom* (Mt. 9:14). The point is that He loves us and desire to shares all with us.

1. The term *Bride* points to our calling to relate to Him in deep partnership (Rev. 19:7; 22:17).

2. Our relationship is described as a *betrothal* and a *marriage* (Jer. 2:2; 3:14; Hos. 2:19-20; 2 Cor. 11:2).

3. These terms emphasize a relationship between Jesus and His Bride which shares all in love.

B. We have a "one-flesh" relationship with Jesus, which has significant implications (Eph. 5:30-32).

30We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones...31Two [man and wife] shall become one flesh. 32This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:27-32)

C. One reason that Jesus is referred to as *the Desire of All Nations* (Hag. 2:7) is because He will reveal His desire for His people in a way that will awaken desire for Him in all the nations.

I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations... (Hag. 2:7)

III. A LOVE PARADIGM OF SALVATION

- A. Salvation is much more than escaping from hell (fire insurance). Jesus called us to a relationship with Him forever in sharing His heart, being near Him, and doing the Father's work with Him.

²⁴Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me... (Jn. 17:24)

- B. The Father saved us to raise us up to sit with Jesus in partnership to demonstrate His kindness.

⁴Because of His great love with which He loved us...⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places...⁷that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:4-7)

IV. A LOVE PARADIGM OF HOLINESS

- A. I refer to "affection-based obedience" as the strongest type of obedience because it flows from experiencing Jesus' affection. It is the most consistent obedience because people moved by love will endure anything for love. It is stronger than "duty-based obedience" (obedience when we do not feel God's presence) or "fear-based obedience" (motivated by fear of negative consequences).

- B. The gospel flourishes when we understand the extravagant love and passions of God's personality. It is essential to know *what* He has done for us on the cross and *what* He will do for us in eternity. Love reveals the *why* behind the *what* of creation and redemption. He wanted a family who would glorify Him and who finds great joy in engaging in deep relationship and partnership with Him.

V. A LOVE PARADIGM OF ETERNAL REWARDS

- A. Jesus taught on eternal rewards and the way to greatness much more than other topic in Scripture. Eternal rewards express how Jesus feels about our love for Him. He is so moved by love that He will openly declare the way that He feels about the way that we loved Him in this life.

¹⁹Whoever...breaks [My] commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom...but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:19)

- B. Jesus has joy in giving His people rewards, and they will have joy in receiving them (Mt. 25:21).

²¹Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. (Mt. 25:21)

- C. Rewards are not about being over people, but having an increased capacity to be with Him where He is. Some see eternal rewards as a way to establish their honor and superiority before others. This is a secular view of authority that is based on the “pride of being over people.” Anyone who has been touched by Jesus’ love would not desire or seek this type of authority or reward in heaven.

- D. Jesus is the most generous and expressive Man who ever walked on earth. In the age to come, He will reward His people with garments, crowns, and much more.