

Session 2 Beauty of God: Encountering God's Affections

I. BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF GOD: HIS EMOTIONS, POWER AND WISDOM

¹⁸ *But we all, beholding as in a mirror the glory (beauty) of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)*

A. The “beholding and becoming” principle – whatever we behold (by meditation unto revelation) in God’s heart towards us becomes awakened in our heart back to God (transformation). To behold God’s heart refers to studying it until we understand it more and thus encounter God.

B. In 2 Cor. 3:18, Paul was referring to the time in Moses’ life in which he cried out to behold God’s glory. To proclaim the Lord’s name is to proclaim His personality (His emotions).

¹⁸ *Moses said, "Please, show me Your glory (beauty)." 19 He said, "I will make My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you..." (Ex. 33:18-19)*

⁶ *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..." (Ex 34:6)*

C. To proclaim the Lord’s name is to proclaim His personality (character). God’s glory includes His power and wisdom, however, the pinnacle of God’s glory is the revelation of His emotions. The beauty of God is seen in God’s emotions or affections for us.

1. *The Lord is merciful* – He is tender with our weaknesses.

2. *The Lord is gracious* – He does not give us what we deserve.

3. *The Lord is longsuffering* – He bears with us and does not write us off.

4. *The Lord is abounding in goodness* – He overflows with good plans for us.

D. The emotions of God that are most easily grasped are His tender mercy and gladness. We will not comprehend His affection for us until we have a foundational understanding of His tender mercy and gladness towards us. God’s tender mercy is beyond anything we can compare with it.

⁷ *Let the wicked forsake his way...let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him...for He will abundantly pardon. 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:7-9)*

¹⁸ *Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of...His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)*

- E. Jesus walked in the anointing of gladness more than any man in history (Heb. 1:9; Ps. 45:7).
⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore...Your God, has anointed You (Jesus) with the oil of gladness more than Your companions (fellow humans). (Heb. 1:9)
- F. David, the theologian of God's gladness, described God's heart as full of joy and pleasure. Jesus is full of joy. His primary posture of heart and leadership style is gladness (Ps 16:11).
¹¹ In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps 16:11)
- G. Gladness and joy are at the center of Jesus' personality. The Holy Spirit imparts Jesus' joy to us through revealing the knowledge of God to us as we feed on God's Word.
- H. God's glorious gladness is infinite. However, the paradigm that is most common is that of a **God who is mostly mad or mostly sad when we relate to Him**. The revelation of a **God with a smiling heart** awakens a smiling heart in us. This revelation releases security in us with a free spirit instead of being dominated by condemnation.
- I. As we become students of God's emotions, we grow in revelation of His tender mercy, then His gladness and then His affection.

II. TRANSFORMED BY ENCOUNTERING GOD'S AFFECTIONS FOR US

¹⁸ That you...may be able to comprehend...what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love (affections) of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:18-19)

- A. Paul's prayer in Eph. 3, is that we might be transformed by encountering the height of God's beauty, and being His affections for us. To know the love of Christ means to know by experience His affections. God wants us to feel His affection for us. It has significant implications in the way it impacts our hearts.
- B. ***Exhilarated***: feeling God's affection brings pleasure and exhilaration to our hearts. The inheritance of every believer in Christ, includes being exhilarated by feeling God's affection and pleasure for us and in feeling it back for Him. We were created to delight in the feeling of being loved by God. Our spirit craves this. God desires to release this to us. We are too often content with a Christianity that is devoid of feeling, or a Christianity that is mostly an intellectual exercise and not a heart experience. He wants our hearts ravished because His heart is ravished. He feels such intense feelings towards us and desires that we have intense feelings for Him. We do not base our experience on feeling, but they do enhance our experience of Jesus. ***God is glorified in us when we are exhilarated with Him*** (His emotions, wisdom and power).

- C. ***Equipped***: feeling God's affection equips us for our full destiny by anchoring our soul in God. When our human spirit feels even a little bit of God's affection then we feel powerful, joyful and fearless in our spirit. In other words, we become ***anchored*** (stabilized) by experiencing God's affections for us. This equips us to resist compromise, to walk in humility with a servant spirit in times of exaltation, and to not yield to the fear of man when criticized. The reality of God's affection stabilizes us so that we walk on the narrow path in a sustained way. This is essential for those all who seek to walk in their full destiny in God.
- D. ***Confidence***: feeling God's affection gives us the confidence in the grace of God to run to God instead of from God when we encounter our sin and weakness.
- E. Paul said that God's love ***passes knowledge***. In other words, we cannot comprehend it without the help of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be comprehended only by our natural ability.
- F. The paradox in the Church: many talk about the love of God while being content to not press into it ***to actually experience its power***. In a spiritual culture of compromise, some are falsely comforted by references to God's love without understanding the glorious reality of it.
- G. The experience of God's affection makes us ravenously hungry for more. We go hard after God's heart to experience more of His affection. Holy diligence is not an attempt to earn us God's love, but positions us to experience more of it.

III. BEING TRANSFORMED BY THE REVELATION OF GOD'S AFFECTIONS

- A. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as a lover to us. We love Him because we understand that He first loved us. We enjoy or pursue Jesus because we understand that He first enjoyed or pursued us.
¹⁹ We love Him because (we understand that) He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19)
- B. ***Principle***: whatever we understand or encounter about God's heart (passion) for us becomes awakened in our heart back to God. Encounter results in transformation. What we understand about God's heart is essential to transforming our emotions.
- C. ***We change our mind, then God changes our hearts***. We change our mind (understanding about God), then God changes our emotions (unlocks our hearts). Wrong understanding about God injures our heart. Wrong ideas about God's personality leads to blocking our intimacy with Him. The most powerful weapon against Satan's perpetual accusations is the fact of God's affection.
³² If God is for us, who can be against us?...³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died...who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love (affection) of Christ?... ³⁷we are more than conquerors through Him who loved (has affection for) us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life...³⁹ nor height nor depth...shall be able to separate us from the love (affection) of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:32-39)

- D. The ultimate statement about our worth and value is that Jesus has the same measure of love (affection) towards us that His Father has towards Him. When we experience Jesus' love, we feel His joy in us, which brings a buoyant confidence and free spirit to our hearts.

⁹ As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide (live in) in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love...11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (Jn. 15:9-11)

1. ***Abide in My love*** – the challenge is to abide in God's love. We must contend to understand God's affections, then continue to fight so that we might remain in its reality. This is the primary issue that Satan will attack as our accuser (Rev. 12:10).
2. ***That My joy may remain in you*** – the Spirit releases Jesus' joy in us, which comes like a wave of "inspiration." It changes how we feel. This can be sustained as an ongoing grace.
3. ***That your joy may be full*** – the "impartation" of Jesus' joy to our emotions transforms our character (emotions make-up) which is consistently strengthened with joy. It can eventually become a part of our emotional make up.
4. ***If you keep My commands*** – the consistent pursuit of 100-fold obedience increases our experience of God's affection by positioning us to receive more of it (not to earn more).
5. ***These things I have spoken to you*** – the Word of God is God's way for us to grow in the experience of His affections in a consistent way.

³² You shall know (experience) the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (Jn. 8:32)

³⁹ You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life...42 I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. (Jn. 5:39-42)