

## ***Session 10 The Ravished Heart of the Bridegroom King (Song 4:9)***

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### **I. GOD’S HEART IS FILLED WITH DESIRE FOR HIS PEOPLE**

A. One of the most significant truths in the Scripture is that the Lord has deep desire for His people. This truth is expressed poetically in the Song of Solomon as the King declared how “His Bride ravished His heart” (4:9) and she confidently proclaimed that “His desire is toward me” (7:10).

Tonight I want to look at the ravished heart of the Bridegroom King. That is who we are looking at tonight—Jesus. We have been talking about Bridegroom, King, and Judge, but tonight is the Bridegroom King and His heart.

Paragraph A. One of the most significant truths in the entire Scripture is the fact of God’s deep desire for His people. This one single truth has changed my life personally as far as I can tell, when I am looking at all the other truths, second to no other truth of the Scripture. I have received many testimonies over thirty or forty years of people who have said, this idea that God delights in me and desires me has changed my life. I believe if it is new idea to you, then really focus in on this. Everybody knows it kind of, but if it is new to you to really lock into it and go deep on this subject. I believe it will change your life as well.

Here in the Song of Solomon this truth is expressed poetically and I am going to highlight two verses. Of course in Song of Solomon it is a love song and in its context it is talking about the glory of love in natural marriage. However the spiritual interpretation is the glory of love between Christ and His Bride. There are two verses I am going to highlight which we are going to look at a little bit and the two together I mean are a one, two dynamic touch on our heart.

***“You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse...” (Song 4:9)***

The first one, the Bridegroom King declares this remarkable divine declaration “You have ravished My heart” He says to His people. This is unthinkable to the natural mind; that the God of creation’s heart would be that moved by our weak love. Because our love is weak but because of what He is like it moves Him. And He says “You have ravished My heart.”

***<sup>10</sup>“I am my Beloved’s, and His desire is toward me.” (Song 7:10)***

Then the next statement is in Song 7:10; the Bride proclaims with great confidence “I belong to You! I am Yours oh Bridegroom King! I am my Beloved’s and I know that Your desire is for me.” And so the divine declaration of the Lord saying “You have ravished My heart” when it enters into our heart and really becomes a part of our own story then we declare it back to Him with confidence. In chapter 7:10 “I am Yours, I really am Yours; I am what You want! And I know Your desire is for me!” when that revelation begins to dominate our heart and really prevail the enemy loses his foothold in anyone’s life when this truth becomes dominant. As a matter of fact the enemy will go to great extremes to make sure His people never discover this truth.

1. **Ravished heart:** Webster defines “ravished” as *being filled with emotions of joy or delight because of one who is unusually attractive* (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).

Number one. Now the Webster’s definition of ‘ravished’ as being filled with the emotion of delight because of someone who is unusually attractive. The Lord is saying that it is because of His personality, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, and because He is so beautiful that He sees beauty in us. And He says “My heart is filled with delight because of the attractiveness of who you are in the grace of God to Me.” Again, that divine declaration the enemy will go to great extremes to cancel this out and to never get you to buy into that because once you lay hold of that even a little bit you move into the confession of chapter 7:10.

2. **His desire is toward me:** Our identity is in belonging to the King and in His desire for us. Our obedience is empowered by seeing ourselves as desired by God. In other words, we live a life of obedience because He desires us—not because we earn or deserve His love, nor do our actions “motivate” the Lord to desire us.

Number two. You see your identity as belonging to Him. You see your identity as His desire is for you. And our obedience to the Lord is so anchored into the ability for us to see that He desires us. Our obedience is empowered, not by trying harder. Our obedience and wholeheartedness is empowered by seeing ourselves as being desired by Him.

Because the human heart was made in such a way that we love to be loved and when we begin to see even the beginning of the beginning that He desires us this way we just want to give our self to Him more and more. The key to radical commitment to the Lord again is not trying harder; it is seeing more clearly. And so I encourage young and older believers to invest your time and energy in gaining more understanding in these truths. I have been teaching these things for thirty, forty years and I never weary of them. I love these subjects; I do not just teach them I love to meditate on them and journal and say them back to God. The old familiar verses I have been saying to the Lord for some decades now and I still believe that I am at the beginning of the beginning to understanding them and it never ever gets old to me.

We live a life of obedience because He desires us; not because we earn it; we do not earn it; it is because of who He is and what He gave us in the grace of God. We do not motivate God to love us; He already does and that motivates us to pursue Him. Some people think that if they really work it up hard then God will be motivated to love them and they are always on the back end of that religious equation. However it is the other way around; when I know how He feels about me even in my weakness I think “Why would I not want to be closer to You? Why would I not want to interact with somebody like You who is so powerful? And You have all authority; You are my creator and my redeemer and You feel this way about me!”

B. God loves us in the way that God loves God. The measure of the Father’s love for Jesus is the measure of God’s love for us (Jn. 15:9; 17:23). This is the ultimate statement of our worth.

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you.” (Jn. 15:9)

Paragraph B: Now of course I never weary of these two statements, John 15:9 this the passage I reference the most of any other Bible verse probably in the last thirty years. I just cannot get over it; where Jesus says that “In the same intensity that the Father loves Me that is how I love you. In the same way the Father loves Me.” I mean this is so vast and this is so big and when you say that to the Lord I encourage you to pause and to thank

Him that this true. Say Lord “I thank You that You love me this way!” and then ask Him to show you more. Meaning do not read the verse and move one quickly, pause and take this glorious reality and truth into personal conversation; even if you only do it for ten or fifteen seconds. You just do not want to read past that verse without pausing, looking to the Lord and say “Thank You! Thank You that You love me this way; show me more! Thank You, show me more!” And if you will say that when you run into passages like this, not every time but often the Holy Spirit will give you just a little extra phrase of insight and inspiration will come with it.

*23“...that the world may know that You...have loved them as You have loved Me.” (Jn. 17:23)*

He says a similar truth in John 17:23 and again we are talking about His ravished heart. Is it possible that He could be ravished for us? I have been asked that over the years “Do you really buy into that?” and I say “Yes, I do.” If He loves me, Jesus, like the Father loves Him beloved that is the definition of being ravished with love. Well Jesus says it a little different here in John 17:23 where He is praying to the Father He says “Father, I pray that the world will know this that You have loved them in the way that You have loved Me. It is not just that I love them like You love Me; You love them like you love Me.” Beloved I say this all of the time we have it made but the enemy does not want us to lock into this; he will go to great extremes to keep us diverted from this truth. And Song of Solomon it is “My heart is ravished over you!” and in the gospel of John it is “God loves you like God loves God” and that is saying the exact same thing. This is the ultimate statement of our worth. And having said that, if this is really the ultimate statement of your worth, which it is, this is a topic you do not want to rush by or only visit occasionally. You want to camp out on these truths; that is why I love to teach classes and courses on this I could go over the same ten to twenty verses over and over again as I cannot say them enough, pray them enough or declare them enough to others. Because every time I move in that direction my direction is moved forward just a little bit; and it is exaggerated to say every time but often and if you drink from this well regularly over the months and years you will look back and find that your emotional chemistry has shifted and has been changed.

## **II. THE CHRISTIAN PARADIGM OF GOD: JESUS BECAME A MAN**

A. The Christian paradigm of God is founded on the revelation of God’s tenderness and love. The idea of God as a tender Father and a passionate Bridegroom was a new thought in religious history in Jesus’ generation (see William Barclay’s commentary on Hebrew 4).

Roman numeral two: The Christian paradigm of God or the Christian perspective of God. I got this from William Barclay’s commentary on Hebrews 4 which I read some years ago and I loved it. I took it not exactly word for word but just took the ideas and some of the sentence is word for word which you can look up if you want to read more on it.

Paragraph A: However the Christian paradigm of God is very unique in history and it is based on the revelation of God’s tenderness towards His people. The idea of a tender Father, a passionate Bridegroom is a brand new thought in religious history; it was not made known or made clear until Jesus declared it in His generation with His own lips. Let’s go back and look at just a snapshot overview of the history.

B. Jewish tradition emphasized God's holiness—His being *fully separate from sin*. They did not think of a holy God as sharing human experience; they thought Him incapable of sharing our experience. By the very definition of being God, they saw God as being “above” sharing the human condition.

Paragraph B: The Jewish tradition when they thought of God they thought of His holiness. Now the Old Testament has many passages of love but history shows us that it was never grabbed a hold of by any Jewish community in any major way it was always kind of peripheral. They were more focused on the idea of the holiness of God; God is holy. And the idea when they thought of God being holy was the He is fully separate from sin. And so the Jewish concept of God was not any idea of God actually sharing in the human experience; not sharing our pain, or sharing our love and partnering with us but they thought of God as being actually incapable of sharing with humans because He is so separate from sin and human beings are sinful. They saw God as above the human dilemma, up in heaven, far away, holy, majestic, and completely disconnected from the human experience in a real practical way. Now that was not the truth of God in the Old Testament but that would have been the common idea of what the Jewish community would have thought when Jesus was teaching about the Father-heart of God. It was a brand new idea to them though it was in their Old Testament scriptures.

C. The Stoics (Greek philosophers) believed that God had *no emotions*. They saw the main attribute of God as *apatheia*—His inability to feel anything. They reasoned that if God felt sorrow or joy, He would be vulnerable to being hurt and thus could be influenced or controlled by what He felt. They believed that anyone who affected His emotions would be greater than God for that moment.

Paragraph C: The Stoics which are the Greek philosophers had a different idea however with some similarities. They believed that God had no emotions at all. They saw the main attribute of God was ‘apatheia’ the inability to be moved by anything. That was very important in Greek philosophy and they reasoned that if God had sorrow and negative and sad emotions or joy and emotions of elation that He would be vulnerable to being hurt, or influenced. Hurt by the pain or influenced by the joy and if God was vulnerable to be moved by human emotions then it was only a matter of time until God could be controlled by them. And they said that cannot be because the person that could move God, according to Greek philosophy, for that moment they would have more power than God; in that moment that God was in pain over their pain or in joy over their love; of course that is a false idea but that is what the stoics thought.

D. The Epicureans (other Greek philosophers) believed that the gods lived *detached*, in eternal bliss. They lived in the intermediate world and were not aware of events occurring on earth.

Paragraph D: The Epicureans back in the ancient world believed that God lived in this detached state of bliss far away. That He lived in this intermediate world and that He was unaware of the events on earth and that it was only afterwards that He would weigh in on the consequences of a person's life.

E. The Jews understood God as a holy God *separated from humans*, the Stoics had an *emotionless god*, and the Epicureans a *detached god*. Into this context of religious thought came the new idea of the Christian God who subjected Himself to human emotion and suffering (Heb. 4:15; 5:8).

Paragraph E: To sum these up the Jews had a God in their understanding that was holy but totally separated from the human experience. The Stoics had an emotionless God and the Epicureans had a detached God. Those are all somewhat similar with a few distinctions to them but it is into this context of religious thought this new

idea that Jesus brought proclaiming that He is the Son of God, fully God and that He loved His people the way that the Father loved Him. That was like “We do not even have a place to put that!”

And then He took it further by saying “Not only do I love you the way the Father loves Me, the Father loves you in the way that the Father loves Me.” Now again what we are talking about is the ravished heart, the heart that is filled with passion in the Bridegroom King. As we are looking at Jesus, Bridegroom, King and Judge. We know that He is a King with power but He is a Bridegroom with deep emotions and deep desire. And He is a Judge as we have said over and over in this course that has zeal to remove everything that hinders love.

### III. GOD’S INVOLVEMENT WITH PEOPLE—DESIRE AND IDENTIFICATION (SONG 4:9-10)

A. The Bride’s identity as His sister and spouse is emphasized seven times (4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 5:1, 2).

Being the King’s spouse or Bride speaks of His desire for partnership with His people (Jn. 17:24).

Top of Page 2. Well the Lord is very different than the great philosophers’ mindset of the detached emotionless God or even the Old Testament Jewish mindset which was not a completely accurate one of a God that was holy but so holy He was separate and He could not even interact with His people or He would just have to destroy them.

Here we find in Song of Solomon and I do not accept any truths about the Christian experience or relationship with Jesus and Song of Solomon that cannot be emphasized, confirmed and validated in the New Testament.

Meaning some people have ideas of Song of Solomon that I have heard some strange ideas and I say “No the safe way to read the Song of Solomon and the spiritual interpretation is to only understand things about God’s heart and His relationship that are anchored clearly in the New Testament; i.e. in the mouth of Jesus or the apostles. Again the Song of Solomon has a natural application to the beauty of married love; that is what it was written about but it has a very dynamic spiritual application that we do not want to dismiss or overlook.

However we do not want to be silly with it either or careless with it and so I have been careful as I have studied that book over the years to only conclude things about God’s heart that are anchored clearly in the New Testament revelation through the lips of Jesus or the apostles.

*“You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse [Bride]...<sup>10</sup>How fair [beautiful] is your love, My sister, My spouse! How much better than wine is your love...” (Song 4:9-10)*

Let’s read it again, He says in verse 9 chapter 4; this is the Lord’s powerful declaration and I want to declare this over you and even in the ministry time we can just sit and open our heart before the Lord and I want to prophetically declare that “He is ravished over you” to break strongholds of shame and dullness and this feeling of rejection that is so prevailing in the human family. And even so in the Body of Christ this feeling of rejection, this feeling of inferiority and of being left out. It is a very normal and widespread human emotion; this emotion of shame and of being disqualified and so if you feel these thoughts you are not alone.

It is a very normal human thought but the enemy uses those thoughts as accusations and he puts demonic energy on those natural human thoughts and then when he puts demonic energy on it is called an accusation from Satan. He is the accuser but we take the word of God and we cancel those false ideas; those natural thoughts, those thoughts from our natural mind. They do not come from the revelation of the word; they come from our unrenewed thinking; from our natural thinking not from the mind of the spirit.

And so we need to hear the word wash our hearts; we need to hear the prophetic declaration over and over from heaven “You have ravished My heart! The devil is a liar! You are not worthless. You are hopeless. You are not disqualified. It is not for nothing! You matter to Me. You have ravished My heart.” And then He gives two statements “My sister, My Bride” the New King James says “My spouse” but most translations say “My sister, My Bride.” Now this idea of the Body of Christ being His sister and His Bride is emphasized seven times in the Song of Solomon and it is because it is important.

***<sup>24</sup>“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am...” (Jn. 17:24)***

B. ***My sister***: This speaks of God’s identification with us by becoming a human (Mt. 12:50; Heb. 2:17; 4:15). Because of love He endured suffering as a human—to be like His brethren in all things. Thus, He has sympathy for us in our struggle and gives us *mercy* (forgiveness) and *grace* (power to live).

Paragraph B: When the King is talking about the Bride being His sister in the spiritual sense what He is saying is “I have partaken of humanity. I took on flesh. I am one of you now. My brother, My sister and you are more than My brother and sister you are My Bride and I want you to know that I am not just a King with power who loves you. I actually became human!” And the point that I want to make here and of course there are many points to that but the point I am going to make, I mean this is just unthinkable or indescribable in its glory is what I mean and it is unthinkable to reach the full limits of what that means.

***<sup>14</sup>Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death...<sup>17</sup>Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful...High Priest... (Heb. 2:14, 17)***

He took upon Himself human flesh; this is indescribably glorious. However because He took upon human flesh as it says here in Hebrews 2 that He had to do this in order to qualify to be the High Priest that saves us. He had to become a human to bear the sin of humans to save humans. It is like the Father looked at His right hand, now this is not exactly how it went, and said “Son I want You to save them but You have to become one of them to save them. Because you have to be a human High Priest that is perfect in order to qualify as the High Priest to save them. You cannot just in Your benevolence say ‘Hey I forgive you;’ You actually have to pay the debt in My court. And then I will give them the gift of Your righteousness.” And so He had to become human.

***<sup>15</sup>For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:15-16)***

However in becoming human here in Hebrews 4 the next passage; and for Hebrews 2 He had to become human to become our High Priest and Savior, which you can use interchangeably in this context. Now here is the point I want to make in Hebrews 4:15 “We do not have a High Priest or a Savior or a Redeemer who cannot sympathize” is that not amazing? Our Redeemer can sympathize; He has empathy in our struggle. He does not say “What is the deal? What is it that you do not understand about what I told you?” He does not talk like that. We have heard our human authority figures talk that way but that is not Him. He says “I sympathize with your

weakness” because He was tempted at all points. There were different applications but He was tempted at all points so He has sympathy.

When He looks at us He does not say “Get with it!” He says “I want you free from that because I know who you are to Me and I know what that compromise will do to your heart; you do not know it but I do and it will hurt and injure you. And it will injure our relationship so it is essential that you step out of that compromise.” And He does not say that cracking a whip but He says “I know the pain, I know what it cost to tear your heart on occasion to pull away from your sin. I know what it means to be pulled and tempted and to say no to the temptation.” Again, He had different applications of it but the temptations were real. Therefore we can come boldly or we can come in confidence or we do not come wondering how He feels when He comes.

Beloved I want to say with certainty when you stand before Him tonight in your weakness He has sympathy. He has empathy. He has affection. He loves you like the Father loves Him and He understands the human struggle more than we know that He understands. And so He says “Come to Me and find mercy” that is the forgiveness part but do not just find mercy find grace because that is the empowering part. The mercy He says “I will totally forgive you but I will not leave you just forgiven; I will empower you progressively to walk free from that.” One thing that you will never from the Lord when you come to Him “I have had enough of you!” He will never let you go. He will never write you off. He will never give up on you. Your friends might, other believers might but He will never because that is not His or the kingdom’s way because He sees so differently than we do.

*C. How fair is your love:* Jesus sees our love for Him as fair or beautiful (4:10) and as delightful (7:6).

*‘How fair [beautiful] and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!’ (Song 7:6)*

Paragraph C: Back to Song of Solomon, just a few verses in chapter 7 before she declared and broke out with this confession “I am my Beloved’s” it is verse 10, the verse we started with at the very beginning. “I am my Beloved’s, His desire is for me!” And just a few verses before she says that in verse 6 this is where she receives some of her confidence. He pronounces over here Song 7:6 and this is the Lord speaking over His spiritual Bride, this is you. This is your story; do not be content to have this be poetry that is symbolic and that is not real; this is real. This will be in the word of God a billion years from now; this is real. The Holy Spirit authored this and included it in the canon of scripture.

Verse 6 He declares “How beautiful,” the NKJV says “How fair” but most translations say how beautiful. Would you rather be called fair or beautiful? Well you know “She’s really fair and he’s fair too” or would you rather hear beautiful? Anyway NKJV let’s strengthen this a little bit here. “How beautiful!” He declares over you by the Spirit. Now our heart repels that, the enemy comes in and says “Do not dare to buy into that!” “How pleasant you are to Me. Oh love with all of your delights” this is the Bridegroom speaking.

*4...But you shall be called Hephzibah...for the Lord delights in you... (Isa. 62:4)*

Then Isaiah echoes the same thing as this glorious love song in Song of Solomon in Isaiah 62. We know this passage well, we have heard it many times here that the Lord names His people Hephzibah which means “I delight in you.” He names you “I like you” He names you “I enjoy you.”

One of the biggest problems that many believers have is not that God does not enjoy them it is that they do not enjoy God enjoying them! I know many believers that despise who they are even in the grace of God they cannot get a handle on it. I do not look at them and think “Oh what a loser.” No! There is a glorious story that is

about your life; it is a glorious story. It is not enough that the Lord enjoys you, He wants you to enjoy Him enjoying you. He wants you to enjoy who you are and that does not mean there are things that you do not want changed but you see who you are in the grace of God under His creative design. You say “Lord, I love who you made me to be and I want to walk in the fullness of it more fully. I love what was in Your heart when You created me, the design that you had, the purpose when I was uniquely created.” There is no one that can give the Lord all of your love except for you and He wants yours and it is beautiful to Him.

D. Talk to God about His love—thank Him for each specific truth and ask for more insight into them.

#### **IV. JESUS’ LEADERSHIP: A BANNER OF LOVE (SONG 2:4-5)**

A. Our experience of God’s love grows strong by feeding on God’s Word at “His banqueting table.” Jesus’ banner, or leadership, over our life leads us so that we experience and express His love (2:4).

***“He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love. (Song 2:4)***

Roman numeral four: Well back to Song of Solomon, it says here in Song 2:4 “He brought me to His banqueting table and His banner over me was love.” And in the verse before she had this revelation of Jesus and said “You are more delightful, more refreshing than any of the others, all the sons of men! I have seen who You are” in verse 3. And then this delightful, refreshing apple tree that was more refreshing than all of the others. Then in verse 4 she says “He brought me to the banqueting table, to the feast and His banner over me was love!”

Now this is a very important revelation and a very practical verse to use. This is a practical expression of God’s heart being ravished for you. The banner over your life is that His leadership will lead you to love; His banner or His leadership. If you could just imagine that He wrote over your life “This is what My leadership is committed to when I look at you. My banner or My leadership goal, My purpose is this to bring you to the experience and the expression of love. I am committed to lead you until you experience My love and not just that but that you express it to Me and to others.”

And so what is the Lord doing in your life? He might be doing many things in your circumstances but more than anything else He is working and His leadership goal is to bring you and to convince you that He loves you and then to express that love through you to others. Sometimes we think that the main goal of God’s purpose for our life is our ministry, our marketplace assignment, our impact, our this and our that; and those are important but they are secondary.

The banner purpose, the goal of what He is focused on is to cause you to experience His heart more. However in order for that to happen He is wanting you to take time, all of us, myself included, to take more time to sit before Him and to open the word and talk to Him from the word of God in a clear way.

**B. *Banqueting house*:** Jesus leads us to His banqueting table—the place we celebrate His love for us and ours for Him. The ultimate fulfillment of this is the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7).

Paragraph B: He is telling us that He wants to lead us to the banqueting table. Tonight just through the teaching of the word in a small way He is feeding your heart from the banqueting table on the message of His love. You will have conversations and some of you tonight and it will continue the banqueting table as you will talk about the love God. Some of you will go to bed tonight and have a dream and in the night watch well they will read

and worship all night and then have a dream in the morning. However when you have that dream from the Lord that is still the banqueting table and He is still feeding you on the love of God. And then He is going to lead you in certain ways and sometimes they will be very disconcerting with what is happening and does not seem to fit and it is not working right. Then we are tempted to think “Oh God you do not love me! You forgot me!” Then some time will go by sometimes months, sometimes longer and we look back and say “Oh! I get it! Oh I see the love of God!” “I was always leading you. My banner leadership was always love that was always the descriptive banner of how I was leading you; always.”

Now the ultimate fulfillment to Him leading us to the banqueting table is the marriage supper of the Lamb. Beloved in a minute, now to me a minute could be one hundred years, but in a minute you are going to be at a banqueting table that is going to be a celebration for the ages that you cannot imagine. You will have a real physical resurrected body with your real believing loved ones, friends and family really eating, really singing, really fasting, really hugging, really at a wedding feast and it will be your wedding.

And we will look back over our lives on things that we do not really understand now and they will have more meaning and fuller meaning. I mean we can gain meaning now in this age but we will have fuller meaning then you will say “Lord because of this, because of that I ended up growing in love!” and He will say “That was it!” “I could not figure it out, I thought it was about growing in comfort or having more power or having more money or having more people like me or listen to me or something!” And He says “No, no those are secondary, I wanted you to grow in love. My descriptive leadership over your life was to lead you into the love of God.”

**C. Banner:** In the ancient world, armies marched in battalions under a flag or banner. The banner over our life is His leadership. Thus, His *banner purpose* for our life is to lead us so we grow in love.

1. His banner over us is His goodness—it includes His ability to overrule negative circumstances by causing everything to work for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Paragraph C, number one. His banner over us is His goodness. We know that He works all things for good. I mean even when the enemy intervenes and interrupts our lives. The Lord says “What the enemy meant for evil I will use it for good but give Me time. Watch Me turn this around to your good.” What I have found to be remarkable over the last forty plus years that I have been a pastor and paying attention to this is that some of our greatest failures, I mean personal sins and failures when we look back a few years later and there is a tenderness, a humility, a discovery of the love of God. And the Lord says “I even used your failure! I did not need you to fail to show you that but I will even use your own failure to show you things and to cause it to come to your good if you will give yourself to Me after you have failed.” Do not fail and retreat; fail and run into His heart and run into the community of God that have His heart.

Now many believers if you fail they will beat on you but the kingdom mindset is that when there is failure and repentance it is that we are to shower them with the love of God, we wash them in the love of God and we steal the enemy’s accusations out of their heart. We will not let them sulk in their sin and in the pain of their failure. We are going to pull the arrows of accusation out of their heart and wash them in the love of God. That is the kingdom community.

***28We know that all things work together for good to those who love God... (Rom. 8:28)***

2. We confess, “*His banner over me is love, even when negative things happen.*”  
We also confess, “*His banner over me is love, even when I fail.*”

Number two. And so when life is hard, circumstances, we confess and we need to say this with our mouth for real, I mean you can whisper it but the word of God moves our heart when it leaves our lips. And to some believers that is a brand new idea and I want to say having been in the kingdom for these past forty-five plus years, the absolute number one principle in my life is saying the word of God back to God. And I think many, many millions of believers would say the same thing.

When I say the word back to God I thank Him that it is true like I said earlier and I ask Him to show me more and I state it over me. “Thank You Lord that everything works together for good” when the word of God gets in my mouth it moves my heart. If I stop saying it I can whisper it in prayer, say it to a person, say it to myself but when I stop saying it with my lips, it does not move my heart as much.

And I know many believers never go there they think “Well I underlined it in my bible.” And I say “No! Get it in your mouth and it will move your heart. Get it in your conversation with God; get it in your resistance of the devil and say what God says when your heart has these negative thoughts. Do not just endure them, take a stand and say what God says and when negative things happen we say His banner over me is love.

When we fail His banner, His plan over my life is restoration and love; that is His plan and that is what He is committed too. His banner over me is love; He works everything together for my good if I will run to Him in the difficulty or the failure.

## V. CHERISHED BY JESUS (EPH. 5:29)

A. Paul prophetically declared that the Church will be glorious or victorious when the Lord returns.

The Lord transforms His people by cherishing them. One way that He cherishes His people is by affirming the budding virtues in their lives. He removes the stain of shame from our hearts.

***27...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church...28Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies...29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (Eph. 5:27-29)***

Top of Page 3. Of course you know by now that I am never committed to finishing the notes; so I will go until we go and then we will just have a ministry time and leave you to read the rest on your own if you want to.

Oh I love this passage, Ephesians 5; Paul prophetically declares that the Church is going to be glorious. Now here is the important part, the Church is going to be glorious before the Lord returns; this is not just in the resurrection. In the Church at the end of the age there is going to be the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There are going to be a lot of troubles and pressures but the Lord is going to work all things together and He is going to have I believe a billion plus believers. Now no one knows the real number of course but I believe that there is going to be a massive, glorious Church walking in the glory of God when the Lord returns.

And in verse 29 which you can read on your own Paul tells us one of the ways that God is going to wash the heart of the Church by the water of the word; read the whole passage later I do not have all of the verses here. Paul says here that “Jesus will wash your heart with the water of the word” and then he says this very, very specific thing “He is going to cherish you and He is going to speak the word over your heart and He is going to wash you with the revelation that He cherishes you.” Beloved this is very significant because the end time Church that grabs hold of the Bridal identity and when the Spirit and the Bride say come in the generation the

Lord returns and the Church knows her identity as a cherished bride. She will have been washed by the revelation, by the teaching of the word, the singing of the word, the speaking of the word in conversation and testimony that He cherishes you.

This is so significant God's goal to transform the end time Church is by the revelation that He cherishes them. I have talked with some bible teachers and they say "Well that just kind of seems sentimental and kind of blah, blah, blah" and I say "No! This is the most glorious reality imaginable! We do not want to draw back on this; we want to go deep in this.

One way in which God cherishes us is that He affirms the budding issues in our life before they mature. We have issues in our lives commitments to righteousness; we want to love God, we want our speech to be pure, we want our finances to be pure, we want our body to be pure in many ways not only just in a sexual way. We want our relationships pure we do not want gossip, slander and envy. We want to believe God, we want to be pure and so we set our hearts to do that but then what we find out is that we come up short of what we set our heart to do. And then the enemy comes and defines us by how we came up short and he convinces us that the essence of our identity is how we came up short.

And then he confirms it, he has plenty of believers that will confirm his accusations against you. They will say them to you but more likely they will say them to the people around you and it will get back to you secondhandedly. The accusations of the enemy, beloved we do not want to confirm and pass on the enemies accusations against a brother or a sister; even a brother that bug us "That guy bugs me, I do not even like him yet. I know I am going to but I do not like him yet" but I am not going to jump in and confirm the devil's accusations against him; I am not going to do that nor do I want to do that. I do not want to contribute to that. And anyway God actually sees us and He sees the longings we have even before we walk them out; I am talking about the righteous longings. "I want to obey You in this area!" and the Lord says "I actually see that" "No! I really do!" He does not just relate to us according to how we have failed; He actually relates to us according to what we have set our heart on too; even before that area has matured.

B. The Lord relates to us on the basis of grace. This includes relating to us according to *what we long to be* —not just according to what we fail to do. The whole truth about our life includes much more than the wrong we have done but it includes the good that we set our hearts to do.

***5...judge nothing...until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)***

1 Corinthians 4 boy I love this passage, I cry with all of these passages, I think I can put all of my favorite verses all on one teaching. Oh I love 1 Corinthians 4, look at this, Paul says do not judge or evaluate anything in a final way right now. He is talking about your own life; he is talking about believers. He is saying "I do not judge myself; I do not bring the final evaluation of whether I am doing good or bad" because people were criticizing Paul and he said "I do not even judge myself" I mean he checks out his heart but I do not have the final evaluation, I do not know. He says "I am going to wait until the Lord comes because He is the only one who knows the whole truth about me; I do not even know it!" Beloved you do not know the whole truth about you but when the Lord comes He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness "Oh no!"

The Lord will reveal the counsels, the stirrings, the plans and the intentions of heart that is what the counsels of the heart are. The longings, the intentions of what you set your heart on. We are shocked when God reveals the

dark things that nobody can see and He reveals the counsels of the things that you really long for; He praises you then; like “What!? Praises? Did you not mean to say that your rebuke will come from God?”

Paul says that there are things in your heart, there is the setting of your heart to walk with God and you do not fully have the whole handle on; I mean you have set your heart there but you are so much more aware of how you come up short but He sees it and is moved by it. I love to say that He is just not moved by our love when it is mature; He is moved by weak love because weak love is not false it is just weak. It does not mean it is false because it is weak. He will look at believers and praise them and praise does not mean like worship like God He will affirm is what it is saying. He will affirm them and say “Brother or whatever the Lord calls him, He will call them by name and say ‘I saw when you were in your twenties you were setting your heart to walk in purity. I saw you stumble but I saw your tears, I saw you return over and over again! I saw that reach in your heart to obey me in that area and in this area; and it moved Me and I affirm you, I see that.

And the person will go like “Well why did I not know that back then? You know that could have really helped me that Lord if You would have told me that back then.” He says “I did in December 2018 when Mike Bickle was talking at the EGS.” I am just kidding; that is the first time I ever used that joke, I think I will try that one again. No, He would say “I did tell you in the word of God; I told you!”

And so I do not know the whole truth about how God evaluates us; all I know is that I stumble and fall, I set my heart to go right back hard and you want to be with people that have that kingdom economy and that kingdom view. You want to be among believers with ‘this is the kingdom view;’ you do not want to get with believers that do the pile-up on and only relate to you based on how you failed. Failure is real but failure is not the final word of your life; it is not the essence of who you are.

I love the phrase ‘the whole truth’ I like that phrase. I mean number one ‘the whole truth’ about your life includes much more than what you have done wrong. I remember talking to a lady once and she said “Well that guy did that and I just want to tell the truth!” I said “Oh really, you are really into the truth right? The whole truth?” “Yes and I am going to expose him. I am going to tell the whole truth!” I said “Do you think that is the whole truth of his life?” “Well maybe not the whole truth.” “Is there anything in his heart with God that is real?” “Well of course!” “Oh so you are not going to tell the whole truth; you are not just going to tell the truth. You are just going to tell the bad side of his struggle. And if you are so committed to the truth tell me the whole truth about you then since you are so into truth.”

She stopped and I said “No, no you love truth; I mean you are so zealous give it to me! Give it all to me, all the dirt of your life! Tell me all of it because you love truth according to what you just said.” And she was patting herself on the back and I have had that kind of conversation many times over the years because some folks want to become like a tiger and they want to go after and just break the person who is struggling and show how zealous they are for God and truth. However the struggle of a person’s life is part of the truth but it is not the whole truth of their life. It is not even the main truth of their life. It is true but it is only a part of the truth. And I have urged them “No, get into the whole truth if you are going to be zealous for truth.” Within the whole truth there are wonderful realities in the whole truth.

And my point is not that we just ignore sin but we want to temper our view of it. We want to take it seriously in our life and repent of it and we want to help our brothers and sisters repent of it but we do not want to gang up on each other and cause the enemy’s accusations to win the narrative of their life.

1. Jesus defines us by our longing to love Him, not by our struggles and failures. He sees the cry of our heart to obey Him, not just our outward actions.

2. Our obedience *begins* when we sincerely set our heart to obey Him, not *after* we gain full victory in an area. Jesus “believes in us”—in our good destiny—as our heavenly Advocate.

Paragraph 2: Did you know that your obedience is not full but it starts the day you determine to obey in that area? Maybe there is an issue where you have stumbled and you say “No, no! I am not okay with this!” the spirit of obedience begins right there. Now the obedience is full when you have walked in consistent victory but the spirit of obedience has already started. And when I look at somebody and they are struggling I want to call them forth and I want to strengthen them to see the spirit of obedience that is budding in their life because people that are failing give up so quickly. I have found over the years that it is so easy for a believer to cave in and collapse and give up “Oh it is not worth it anymore!” and I say “It is worth it! The devil is a liar and those five or ten people talking about you are only taking the lies about the devil against you. There is a truth about you; do not give up; do not give in! There is a spirit of obedience in your heart and in your heart cry!” And many people that are wounded by their own failure they need the voice of the word of God to bring them and steady them and call them out of the fog and the confusion they feel and scandal of failure where your heart hurts so bad. You need kingdom brothers and sisters to stand with you; be one of them! Say this to your own heart and say this to them. I mean I am all for telling them to be honest about their sin and repent. I am all for repent of your sin because I am not into telling people “Well boys will be boys, do what you do and hey God is good” No we have to repent of our sin but He is so gracious and tender when we do.

C. An example of the Lord’s gracious leadership is seen in the life of Gideon. While Israel was being attacked by the Midianite army, Gideon hid in fear (Judg. 6:11-12). An angel appeared to Gideon calling him *a mighty man of valor*. The Lord saw in him what he could not see in himself—seeds of courage. The Lord named him according to what he would be in the future—a great leader in Israel.

***<sup>12</sup>And the Angel of the LORD...said to him, “The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judg. 6:12)***

Paragraph C: One of the great examples in scripture of God being gracious and seeing the budding virtues in someone’s life there are actually quite a few examples. I have enjoyed pointing this one out over the years; Gideon. Gideon back in Judges 6 the context is that the Midianites this strong powerful army are attacking the Israelites. And Gideon is hiding in a winepress. He is trembling. He is afraid. And rightfully so, I mean it is a mighty army and this is not a small thing. And the angel of the Lord appears to him and says “Mighty man of valor!” Gideon looks around and thinks “I am the only one in the winepress, who me?” “Yes, that is your name mighty man of valor!” “Well I am kind of having a bad day right now and I am wanting to get out of this conflict and this battle.” He says “Gideon let me tell you something you cannot see about yourself. You have seeds of courage in you that have just not matured in you yet. You have leadership on your life that has not come out yet.

Gideon is saying “Hey, I am a simple man, just come on man give me a break!” He says “I see what you do not see about your heart Gideon; you have seeds of courage. You have a leadership calling” and God called for that which did not exist; He called it forth as though it did and Gideon walked in it! One of the things that I love to do and I do not do it as good as I want to is I love to call forth budding virtues in people’s lives. I love to see somebody who is reaching to follow God though they are stumbling and tripping and to focus on the reach that is in their heart and to tell them that God sees the reach and to tell them “There is leadership in you. There is

reality in you; there is righteousness in you; there is a zeal in you!” And they say “Really? Do you have the right guy here?” “Well I am the only one in the winepress; so you have to be talking to me.”

D. David’s failures are recorded in the Scripture, yet God’s testimony of his life was that David did *all* of God’s will and fulfilled God’s purpose (Acts 13:22). He refused to quit, even after failures.

***22...He testified and said, “I have found David...a man after My heart, who will do all My will...” (Acts 13:22, NAS)***

Paragraph D: Well a thousand years after king David died, a thousand years later, Paul the apostle in Acts 13 under the anointing of the spirit; he is speaking for God, Acts 13:22 “Thus says the Lord I found David, a man who did all of My will!” “Really? Lord respectively do You know 1 and 2 Samuel? Have you read it lately? He messed up a bunch of times!” The Lord says “Through the editing process of grace he is a man that did all of My will.” “Really?”

I love the one in Romans 4. I do not have it here but Paul does the one in Romans 4 he said “Abraham, his faith did not waiver” “Really? What about the one gal and that kid and Ishmael and all of that? That is called wavering in my house.” The Lord says “No, he did not waver. He did not waver in the big picture of grace. He stayed steady, he had momentary lapses. However the narrative of his life at the end two thousand years after Abraham died Paul said “He never wavered.” A thousand years after David died Paul under the anointing said “He did all the will of God!” I said “Well if this is how You do it I have a chance then!” The Lord says “This is how I do it; nobody has a chance except for the grace of God.”

E. The devil accuses God’s people because he knows that accusation and the fear of being rejected by God will hinder our ability to grow in love. Being preoccupied with condemnation, failure, and shame hinders God’s people from experiencing His love and walking in victory.

***10...the accuser of our brethren...accused them before our God day and night... (Rev. 12:10)***

F. We are to reckon or “see ourselves” as those who are alive to God—loved and delighted in by Him. We offer ourselves to God as those *alive to God*—accepted, delighted in, and without condemnation.

***11...reckon yourselves [see yourself] to be...alive to God in Christ...<sup>13</sup>present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead [without any condemnation]... (Rom. 6:11-13)***

Paragraph F: I am going to end with this Romans 6 a very, very important verse. Paul says “...reckon yourselves alive to God in Christ Jesus and do not only reckon yourselves alive to God but present yourselves to God as alive from the dead.” What does this mean? Paul says “What has happened to you through Jesus’ death and resurrection is that He has forgiven your sin, He has wiped it from the book the debt against you; so there is not debt against you. He has given you the Holy Spirit though a believer may say “Well I have not really experienced the Holy Spirit much” but he says “Well He dwells in you and the fact that you have not interacted with him does not mean He is not yours and that He is not there. I have given you the authority to use My Son’s name.”

Beloved we can resist the devil now because we have the authority in the name of Jesus; we do not have authority of our self but we do have His authority. Our small deeds even giving a cup of cold water of

righteousness and our small deeds of obedience are remembered and rewarded forever. That makes every single day important because the smallest encouragements, blessings and acts of obedience that nobody sees they are remembered forever and rewarded. That made today, this afternoon no matter what you were doing if you were seeking to obey the Lord or to bless somebody or do His will even in a small way. And we do as well in small ways ninety-nine percent of the will of God in our lives are very small little things.

Did you know that He is going to remember it forever? Maybe you were alone and you just humbled yourself today. Maybe you talked to Him or maybe you blessed a few people through conversations. He says “I will never forget those things.” My point is this we are to see ourselves as who we are in the grace of God alive to God. The enemy wants us to see ourselves as dead to God, under judgment, no authority, no Holy Spirit living in us, our life as wasted, our days mean nothing and that is what it means to be dead to God.

Paul said “Do not go there, that was before Christ. Now, there is no condemnation, My pleasure is towards you. I remember all of your small deeds of obedience. You have the authority of Jesus to rebuke the devil; you do not just have to put up with the devil’s attacks. You can actually stand against them. You have the indwelling Spirit; talk to Him and draw on His presence by recognizing Him. Literally by saying “Thank You I am aware of Your presence. Thank You, You are there!” You will begin to activate Him in your life if you begin to talk to the Holy Spirit. I tell people the way you walk in the Spirit is by talking to the Spirit. I talk to the Holy Spirit dwelling in me. You talk to the Indwelling Spirit and you will activate Him in your life. You see it is really not complicated. Paul said “See yourself as alive to God and these four or five things I said these are true of your life.” The devil is going to come to you and say “You do not have any Holy Spirit in you and you are a sinner and your life is wasted and God is mad.” Say “No! No! I am going to reckon” which means to see, reckon is an accounting term. It is an accounting term it is to see what the ledger says is true “Account yourselves as alive to God.” And then he goes on in verse 13 “When you come to God to worship” and I do not mean just a worship service but when you come before Him “do not come before Him as somebody who presents them self as dead; under condemnation, their life is worthless, they do not have the authority of Jesus. God never smiles on them; their life is wasted. Do not come and present yourself that way to Me; present yourself as alive!” Beloved we have a Bridegroom King He is passionate, He is tender and He is affectionate. And we present our self as alive to God. Our days might be long, they might be hard but He is smiling at the smallest things I do and He remembers. There is no condemnation against me. I have the authority of Jesus, I have the Indwelling Spirit I can talk to which activates Him in my heart and in my emotions. I can feel His presence when I talk to Him with the word. I am going to live as somebody who is alive to God because if you are born again you are however many born again people live as though they are dead to God; that is how they carry their heart. They see themselves mostly through their sin and failure and what they do not have. They do not see themselves through who they are in Christ and what they do have and how God feels about them.

Amen and amen, let’s stand before the Lord. We have a beautiful Bridegroom. We have a powerful King. We have a zealous Judge; He is going to remove everything in the earth that is standing in the way of love. I mean love is going to prevail forever and forever. Beloved you are in the kingdom, you have it made; you have it made. The devil is a liar. I mean for the next few years this and that may not get all worked out but you have a billion year story and that is the beginning of it.

Lord here we are before You; we love Your leadership Jesus. We love who You are; we love that You are ravished over us. Holy Spirit I am asking You to wash hearts by the water of the word tonight; cherish their hearts. Reveal Your cherishing heart to them. Cherish them that they can walk in the glory. Paul said He is going

to present a glorious church because Jesus is going to cherish them. Cherishing is what causes the spirit of glory to increase in our life.

Lord we say yes to Your word; we believe Your word. We are going to make time to hear Your word over and over again. Lord here we are. Lord we are hungry for You. Jesus, Lord we believe Your word. Jesus we believe what Your word says.

Lord I ask You to come and mark our hearts. Lord come and reign on us living water. I want to invite anyone who would like prayer because the enemy is just attacking you; you believe the things I have said tonight from the word but in your heart you are saying “But the enemy is just condemning me, I know it is not true but I would like prayer. I would like this power of this broken off of me again tonight.” Because the enemy always uses condemnation and accusation which are really the same thing; and so if the enemy is hitting you with that again, it is very, very common that is what he does night and day. He says “Satan does it night and day, night and day trying to convince you that you are a loser; he tries to convince you that it does not matter; convince you that you have gone too far. There is not a new beginning; all of this stuff is for someone else, it is not for you.” That is how the enemy talks, that is the accuser. That voice he gives to millions the same story and so do not feel bad if he has put that in your mind but let’s resist it. Let’s resist it together.

I’m going to as a bunch of you if you would come on up and help me pray for some folks. The Holy Spirit will give more; if you lay hands on them you do not even have to say much just say “Jesus touch them” just touch their shoulder. And we are going to keep singing over them and keep praying and maybe we will have several other focuses of ministry too. In the name of Jesus, I take authority over the spirit of condemnation and lies right now. I say a new beginning, a new day, a new encounter with the Lord, a new clarity of your identity, a new breakthrough in your faith with God. Lord come and touch hearts right now.

G. Many believers “see” only their sin, and thus they feel dirty and ashamed. A person who feels dirty in God’s eyes will “live dirty,” while a person who feels clean in God’s eyes will “live clean.”

H. We are empowered to love *Him* by “seeing ourselves” as loved *by Him*.

*<sup>19</sup>We love Him because [we understand that] He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19)*

I. The Spirit enables us to “see” or comprehend the value, destiny, and beauty that God sees in His people. *Width*—whom it includes (all nations); *Length*—how far it reaches (all sin) and how long it lasts (forever); *Depth*—what it cost Jesus in descending so low; and *Height*—how high it exalts us.

*<sup>17</sup>...that you...<sup>18</sup>may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height...<sup>19</sup>to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge... (Eph. 3:17-19)*

## VI. AFFECTION-BASED OBEDIENCE

A. “*Affection-based obedience*” is obedience that flows from experiencing Jesus’ affection for us and then giving it back to Him. It is the strongest and most consistent kind of obedience.

B. “*Duty-based obedience*” is our commitment to obedience even if we do not feel God’s presence. God’s Word requires that we obey God even when we do not feel inspired to do so. We obey because God is our creator and redeemer; thus He has the right to require our obedience.

C. **“Fear-based obedience”** is obedience motivated by the fear of negative consequences. This, too, is biblical. If we are not motivated to obey God by His Word speaking to our heart, then God will use His rod because He loves us too much to leave us in compromise (Heb. 12:5-11). However, fear-based obedience is not sufficient to motivate us to resist the pleasures of sin consistently over time.

1. Many use shame and fear as the primary way to motivate people to obey God. Holiness is often presented in a negative way, with many warnings of the consequences of sin.
2. God’s Word has clear prohibitions, but they were not designed to transform the heart. Yes, we do present the consequences of sin, yet we realize this alone is not sufficient. The fear of consequences does not overpower the tendency to sin—it merely causes people to sin in secret.

## VII. EXPERIENCING GOD LOVE LEADS US TO REST— 2-FOLD REST

A. ***The Rest of forgiveness***: We experience this in the assurance that we are forgiven as a free gift in Jesus. We rest in receiving forgiveness because of the finished work of the cross (2 Cor. 5:17).

B. ***The Rest of intimacy***: We experience this as we pursue intimacy with God. Our hearts come to rest as we conclude our highest life purpose is to be abandoned to God and love Him with all our heart.

C. ***“You made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You.” Augustine*** (AD 354-430).

D. Many believers who rest in the assurance of being forgiven are still striving to find purpose for their life. There is a God-shaped vacuum in our hearts that can only be fulfilled in the “rest of intimacy.”