

Session 11 Loving God by the Power of the Spirit (Jn. 14:15-24)

I have said many times that I believe John 13-17 is the greatest teaching given by the greatest Teacher in human history. It is a passage that is uniquely designed, I believe, to cause the end-time Church to walk in victory because, as I have made the point a number of times earlier in this course, He speaks John 13-17 on a Thursday night when two days earlier on Tuesday He gave the end-time teaching. He called them not to let their hearts be troubled on Tuesday, and now it is Thursday, and He is continuing really in the same conversation.

Although the passage has obviously been relevant throughout all of Church history, it has a particular importance of empowering the end-time Church to walk in victory in an hour when there is more hostility against the Church, greater dimensions of demonic activity and darkness. However, the Church will never be more deeply committed to Jesus and the power of love than in that time of history.

I also say as always: we will never cover all of the notes, I just put extra ones in there for your own personal study, but we will cover some of this tonight.

I. REVIEW: JESUS' COMMAND NOT TO ALLOW TROUBLE TO DOMINATE OUR HEART

- A. Jesus commanded the disciples not to let trouble dominate their hearts (14:1). There are human dynamics involved as seen in His command to “let not...” He responds by giving us peace (14:27).

¹***“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God [a fact], believe also in Me [a command].”***

²⁷***“My peace I give to you... Let not your heart be troubled... (Jn. 14:1, 27)***

I always give a little bit of review. The overriding commandment and exhortation in John 13-17 is right here in John 14:1. He is commanding the disciples not to allow trouble to dominate their heart. He lays out a number of types of trouble that is knocking on their door. He says, in effect, “You must resist the troubled mindset and troubled emotions by saying no to it and speaking My word, My truths, and My promises,” and if you do that, John 14:27: “My peace will guard your heart and I will give you supernatural peace if you will resist the normal tendency to allow trouble to dominate your heart and your mind.”

- B. John 13-17 tells how to engage our troubled hearts to overcome grief, fear, shame, and betrayal. Jesus gives us line-upon-line insight into God’s heart and promises that anchor our hearts. The truths in John 13-17 equip us to respond to the end-time troubles highlighted in Matthew 24.

In John 13-17, Jesus is teaching us how to engage our heart with Him, and He specifically identifies four negative emotions and mindsets; grief, fear, shame, and betrayal. You could list anxiety in there with fear as well. Jesus is giving a line-upon-line teaching giving insight into God’s promises and the truths in His heart so that we could be anchored in our hearts and equipped to walk in victory in the time of trouble.

- C. In session one, I highlighted **7 reasons why the disciples were troubled**. On Thursday evening at the last supper just moments before 14:1—He spoke of *leaving them by death* (13:36), *Judas’ betrayal* (13:11), and *Peter’s denial* (13:38). **On Tuesday**, Jesus exhorted them **not to be troubled** (Mt. 24:6) in context to the intense pressures that He prophesied would come in Matthew 24 (and the parallel passage in Luke 21). These pressures included *crisis in the culture* (wars, racial conflict, betrayal, pestilences, etc.), *persecution* (some would be killed, beaten, or imprisoned; Mt. 24:9; Lk. 21:12), *national crisis* (the destruction of Jerusalem; Lk. 21:20-24) and the *delay of God’s promises*.

‘You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled...’ For nation [ethnos] will rise against nation...there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. (Mt. 24:6-7)

Again, on that Tuesday just two days earlier, in the last message that He gave them, He outlined why the disciples would be facing trouble. Then He adds some more on that Thursday night. In session 1, I listed seven different types of trouble Jesus identified to them from the Tuesday message of Matthew 24, which is on the end times, and the Thursday message of John 13-17. We covered that in Session 1, but I wanted to put that in the notes here just to remind you.

D. In session one, I highlighted **8 truths that He told them to believe** to equip them to not be troubled.

Also in Session 1, Jesus highlighted eight truths found in John 14 that we have to engage actively with because grief and shame, fear and anxiety, bitterness and betrayal naturally really touch our heart in a deep way. Jesus said, in other words, “If you will engage with Me in these eight truths, you will have power to not allow those negative mindsets to dominate you.

E. In this session we focus on Jesus’ promise that the Spirit would empower the weak disciples to love and obey God (14:15-16). With this great promise we must be intentional to interact with the Spirit.

Now in this session we are focusing on this dramatic and awesome promise that we are so familiar with. Often does not move us because we are so familiar with the promise. He promises in John 14:16 that the Holy Spirit will empower even weak and broken people like them, like these disciples who were being weighed down with fear, anxiety, fear, bitterness, and shame. They were being weighed down. The Holy Spirit will empower us to love God, even weak and broken people such as we are.

That is such a glorious promise, and the implication is that we need to value intentionally interacting with the Holy Spirit in an even more intentional way. The Holy Spirit would say, “I am really in you, and I really will help you, but I really wait on you to engage with Me.”

We engage with Him by taking these truths and bringing them into the conversation. The phrase I have used so many times is that we say, “Thank You! Show Me more!” With every one of these truths we pause, we thank the Lord for them, and then ask the Spirit to show us more. And that is the beginning of just little sound bites of conversation that engage the Holy Spirit.

F. John 14 is the most detailed passage related to walking out the first commandment. We are called to participate in the family dynamics of the Trinity as described in 14:7-27 and applied in 15:1-12.

This is stunning. Again, we have said it over and over, and so we can get used to it, but you just really cannot get used to this idea. We, the redeemed, are called to participate in the family dynamics of the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the way They interact, the way They love, the way They delight in each other, and the way They partner together. Jesus is saying, in effect, “Some of this We are extending to you, but you have to be intentional to interact with this.” It is Father, Son, Holy Spirit and the children of God or the Bride of Christ, which are the same. The angels are watching. They are witnesses, but we are called to actually participate in that family dynamic of Father, Son and Spirit, engaging in that Trinitarian conversation. Not all that Jesus and the Father and Spirit are involved in, but some of it. That is what John 14 is highlighting.

II. OBEDIENT LOVE (JN. 14:15)

- A. Jesus connected His promise to answer prayer in 14:13-14 to the Spirit empowering them to love Him in 14:15-16. Pray with faith for the Spirit to impart the Father's love for Jesus in you (17:26). It takes the power of God to love God with all of our heart.

¹³*And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

¹⁴*If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. ¹⁵If you love Me, keep My commandments...*

¹⁶*the Father...will give you another Helper... (Jn. 14:13-16)*

The point we are focusing on tonight is being empowered to walk in obedient love. We are referring back to Session 9 where I talked about Jesus promising to answer our prayer. However, the part I want to connect with here is not just the promise to answer prayer but I want to connect that promise to answer our prayers to the power that He will give us to love Him.

Let's read the passage. A lot of times we will read the promises of prayer being answered, and we end it there with blessed circumstances but you will see immediately after Jesus says, "I am going to answer your prayer," He ties it into prayer to walk in the power and grace of God to love God. Then we are going to use our faith not just to get blessed circumstances and an anointed ministry, yes for sure, but we are going to use our faith first to walk in the grace to love Him with power in our hearts. Now, we believe the other things as well, and we want to do the other things, but Jesus is connecting these two together in a very intentional way. It is often missed because we will read verses 13 and 14, "I will answer your prayer," and we say, "Yay!" and then that is the end of the message. Then we start verse 15, "Love Me and obey Me," and that is another message.

But Jesus is saying, "No, it is the same conversation! Use your faith to activate grace in your heart to walk with a vibrant spirit and to walk in the power to love Me." And, again, I like blessed circumstances. I like anointed ministry, but that is not the first priority that Jesus pointed out when He gave them this remarkable statement of answering their prayer.

Let's look at verse 12. He says, "The works that I do, you will do!" That is like, "Whoa! That is pretty intense!" He says, "Well, let Me be really specific,"—verse 13—"Whatever you ask"—qualifier number one—"in My name I will do it that the Father would be glorified." That is qualifier number two. There are two qualifiers. And we looked at that a bit in Session 9, so I do not want to go through that again.

He says in verse 14, in effect, "In case you did not really hear Me, I want to say it again." He only repeats a few things in John 13-17—so when something is repeated in these five chapters—and I mean the real estate is really expensive real estate in these five chapters—so when a phrase or a truth get repeated again, take special notice of it. He says in verse 14, "If you will ask Me anything, I am telling you again, if you ask it in My name." In other words, "something that I can endorse, something that is in agreement with My plan for your life, I will do it."

Then He says in verse 15, right to the point, "For example, for instance, if you love Me"—He is talking about answered prayer right now—"you will obey Me," and the implication is to talk to the Holy Spirit about growing in the anointing of love so we can walk in stronger obedience. Then He says, "Well, if you think you are weak and broken, you are weary, all of you are going to stumble tonight and draw back and not stand up for Me. You are going to scatter and leave, and you might feel a lot of shame, but I want to tell you this," verse 16, "The Father is going to release a Helper inside of you called the Holy Spirit." We will look at that more next week.

- B. Jesus emphasized twice that “He will do whatever we ask” in His name that the Father might be glorified (14:13-14). The Spirit's greatest work is to empower people to love Jesus (14:15; 16:14). We pray for miracles (14:12) *from a place* of loving Jesus and *for the purpose* of others loving Him. The Father is glorified most as people grow in the grace to walk in obedient love for Him.

³²I will run the course of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my heart. (Ps. 119:32)

Jesus emphasized twice, and, again, that is unusual to have a phrase or a truth emphasized over and over in John 13-17 because every phrase is so key. The reason He said, “What you ask so that the Father is glorified,” I believe, the greatest work of the Spirit in human history is when He causes an unbeliever to believe but beyond that is when He causes that weak and broken human being, that heart, empowering them supernaturally to love Jesus. It is counterintuitive to the human spirit to do that, because it is our desire just to do our own thing. To be anointed with a vibrant spirit to love God, Jesus—a God whom we cannot see and we do not always feel or understand—to love Him takes the power of God to love God.

Yes, we are going to pray for miracles. Yes, we are going to pray for greater works and miracles and healings, but we are doing it from a place of loving Jesus, and we are doing it for the purpose of seeing other people love Jesus. It is easy to get captured with the vision of an anointed ministry, having an exciting ministry, and there is nothing wrong being excited about your ministry.

However, Jesus is saying, as it were, “Let’s anchor this! You are doing it because you love Me and because you are wanting to produce love in the people that I am using you to touch! It is not so that they are enamored with you but it is so that they are loyal to Me.” That is what He is saying in this.”

- C. When Jesus said to “ask anything” (14:13), He immediately focused them on the grace to love Him (14:15). The ultimate “anything” we can ask for is the grace to walk out the first commandment.

²⁴...whatever things you ask...believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mk. 11:24)

Well, I just said He said, “Ask anything,” and He says that twice, and then He immediately talks about the grace of God to love Him. The Father is glorified because He said to pray prayers that will glorify the Father. Nothing glorifies the Father more than weak and broken people walking in the grace to love and obey Him with loyal love. That is stunning and remarkable. That is supernatural for that to happen. We need to have it in our awareness that Jesus was making that part of supernatural ministry and that is really important to Him.

- D. On Tuesday, Jesus defined loving God as the “first” command (Mt. 22:38), thus identifying it as the Spirit's first priority and agenda and the “first” calling for our life and the promise we pray for most.

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

Well, going back two days, He just said this two days ago to them on that Tuesday. He stood before them and said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart,” in Matthew 22:37-38. Then He says something unusual that you do not find in other places, He said, in effect, “I want you to know that loving God with all of your heart and all your strength is the first priority to My Father!”

That is a remarkable statement, with that word “first.” It is easy to overlook the implication that Jesus said, “This is what is first!” This is what the Holy Spirit is saying, if the Spirit is speaking to you. People ask, “What is the Spirit saying?” I promise you, if you are listening, He is talking to you most about loving God, not most about your ministry. He is talking to you about your ministry, and we want Him to, but if you are listening to Him carefully, the first thing He is talking to you about are the ways you can grow in the grace of God to love

Him with all of your heart. I mean, this is remarkable because we are not left to doubt or to wonder what God wants most.

I do not have to wonder right now what Jesus is going to be most concerned with and talk to me mostly about when I stand before Him on the last day. He is not going to talk to me most about how big my ministry was and its impact. He is going to talk to me most about the size of my heart response. I am positive of it. He called it first. There is no question. We are not left to wonder. That is fantastic that in this age we know what the pop quiz is going to be on that day! It is not really a pop quiz as we are being given plenty of notice, but for most people it is going to shock them when they are actually evaluated. We actually have the answer ahead of time. We know what is first.

He said that on Tuesday, and now on Thursday in John 14:15, when He says “love Me,” He is applying that “love God with all of your heart” to Himself. He said, “I told you to love God with all of your heart, that is first. Now, I am applying that to you loving Me that way. That is what I am telling you. Make it number one.”

- E. Jesus defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience (14:15, 21, 23). He calls us to love God on God’s terms or by His definition of love. He is the most qualified to define love (1 Jn. 4:16). There is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey Him. The distorted grace message promotes the sentimental definitions of love that minimize obedience to Jesus—it is a deception. Jesus never apologized for calling His people to holiness as if it was the “negative.”

This is really important. Jesus defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience. A lot of folks do not understand loving God as being anchored in being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience. They think of loving God as maybe that if they cry in a worship service, then they love Him, or they turn on their music and say, “Oh, I love Him!” I love that, and that is really good, but Jesus is saying “No, it is more than that. It is more than feelings when you are in a worship song. It is a seven-day-a-week thing.”

*Jesus calls us to love God on God’s terms. This is really big and really important. We are to love God by **God’s** definition of love. Jesus is the most qualified man in human history to define love. There is lot of rhetoric in the culture today, much of which has found its way into the conversation of the Church such that we are coming up with cultural definitions of what love is that do not agree with Jesus. And we think, “This is what love would be,” or “So this is what love must be!”*

Jesus is saying, “No, no, you must love Me on My terms. Love God on God’s terms.” I want to say this really clearly: there is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey Him. There is no such thing.

There is a distorted grace message that is getting stronger and stronger. It is a presentation of grace separated from a heart cry to want to obey the Lord. There are these sentimental definitions of love that are growing in the conversation of the culture and the Church that minimize obedience. I want to say as a shepherd with kindness but with clarity: that is a deception. It is a dangerous, dangerous deception. Though you could get a lot of people in the Church world to approve of it, but that does not mean that God is going to be convinced of it. There is no substitute for obedience, none.

Somebody says, “Well, I am going to do a little bit of immorality, a little bit drunkenness, do a little bit of this, be dishonest a little bit with money, but I will go to a few more prayer meetings and cry during the worship service. Are we even?”

And the Lord is saying, “No, no! We are not even! It is not about earning My love!” The idea of obedience, purity, holiness, and faithfulness is that it is actually where the liberty of the human spirit is found in the greatest way. Jesus is actually contending for our greatness and for our liberty. He is not saying, “I am God, I

forgave you, and you are going to go to heaven when you die. But, I have one little bit of bad news to tell you: you have to obey Me between now and then. Sorry! My Father is making Me push this obedience thing!” No! He is not saying, “I have good news—you will go to heaven—but the bad news is that you have to obey between now and then.” He is saying, “Obedience will liberate your spirit from shame, fear, all kinds of negative anxieties, and bitterness as you get freedom in that trajectory of a spirit of obedience.”

- F. The greatest pleasures available to the human spirit are the spiritual pleasures that come to us as **God reveals God** to us—empowering us to obey Him. We are freed from the **inferior pleasures** of sin by experiencing the **superior pleasures** of the gospel. He contends for our liberty and greatness. We were created for love—so we only thriving as God *reveals* His love to us and *imparts* it in us.

The greatest pleasure of the human spirit is found when God reveals God to the human heart so that we would love Him back in return. That is the greatest pleasure for the human frame. So Jesus is not kind of embarrassed or a little bit sneaking this in like, “Oh I love you! Heaven is great! You have to obey Me. Heaven is so great! It is going to be so great! You have to obey Me!”

No, He is not doing it that way. He is saying, “I am contending for your greatness, for your liberty, and you will have pleasure like no other kind of pleasure, spiritual pleasure, when you enter into the greater growth of Me revealing My love to you and you giving it back to Me.” It is a glorious, glorious reality. Do not let anybody steal this from your heart. Do not let anyone steal this from you.”

Again, the argument in the culture is so deceptive, and the ones with the argument are well meaning. They say, “Hey, we will make it easier on you and pat you on the back. We will just keep you stuck in your dark emotions, stuck in your addictions and negative things.” No! We want to be liberated! We want to walk free of those things. That is our destiny in the grace of God! And, loving God is the way forward.

Now, when I say, “the spirit of obedience,” that is a key phrase because there are no super saints. What I mean by “a spirit of obedience,” I am talking about the guy or the gal who says yes, takes two steps, and then stumbles over the things we said yes to. However, we do not stumble and say, “Oh well, it is what it is!” We say, “No! I am at war against this! Lord! I want to obey You in this!” Though you stumble again, yet, you rise up and declare war on it. That is a spirit of obedience. That is walking in the pathway of obedience. It is not yielding and stumbling and saying, “Augh! It is what it is, I am stuck here! I am going to look for some Bible verses to back it up that it is okay that I do this.” Do not go there. The spirit of obedience does not mean that you have obtained a mature obedience; it means that you have set your heart on it. And, if you are doing that, then you are in the right trajectory to have a vibrant spirit.

- G. The call to love God is the point that Jesus repeated most in John 13-17. Jesus linked loving God with obeying God five times in John 14—three times (14:15, 21, 23) He said it in a *positive* way, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Once (14:24) He said it in a *negative* way, “He who does not love Me does not keep My words.” Once (14:31), *He applied it to Himself:*

¹⁵If you love Me, keep My commandments...²¹He who...keeps them, it is he who loves Me...

²³If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...²⁴He who does not love Me does not keep My words...³¹I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. (Jn. 14:15-31)

*Loving God is the controlling idea of the rest of John 14. Jesus linked loving God to obeying Him five times in John 14. Remember, if something is repeated in John 13-17, it is really important. This is the **most** repeated truth in those five chapters. Five times in these next verses, and I have them written right here. When you read*

it, do not miss the significance of the repetition. It is heaven shouting, “This is important! Do not let anyone steal this from your heart! It is your liberty! It is your greatness! It is your inheritance to walk in this!”

Let me just read to you the “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Okay, verse 15, “He that has My commandments and keeps them, that is the one who really loves Me.” Okay, verse 23, “If you love Me, you will keep My word, My commandments.” In verse 24, He says it negatively, “He who does not love Me does not keep My words.” Verse 31, He says, in effect, “This is the way I live: I love My Father and the evidence is that I keep His commandments.” He says, as it were, “I know the pleasure and the liberty and freedom that comes in that kind of relationship with My Father with a spirit of obedience.”

- H. Serving Jesus faithfully and denying our lustful desires are “the theater” that God chose for us to express our love to Him. Jesus takes this personally. Some think of lust as only about immorality, but lusts include covetousness, anger, bitterness, retaliation, complaining, slander, and more.

Serving Jesus faithfully, number one, and denying our lustful desires: these are the theater, the arena, that God has chosen for us to express our love to Him. Jesus takes it personally, when we are faithful in our ministry, and what I mean by serving faithfully—I do not mean when things are going great and the money is there and people are happy. I mean nobody is paying attention to you, the three people that even know that you are doing it are kind of criticizing you, you do not feel anything in it, and the Lord says, “But that is the assignment I called you to do; stay with it.”

“Why? They are not even appreciating me. I am not being honored. I am not being valued.”

He would say, “But I assigned you to do that, and when you do that, I take it personally that you love Me.”

When I begin to connect the dots like that, then I am steady in the routine and rigors of my assignment because a lot of my assignment like everyone has routine and rigors, and I think “I do not really like this, but here is my problem I like You, and You want me to do it! Augh! Is there any way You could give me a different assignment?”

He says, “I want you to do these things.”

And they are things in your home, they are things in your friendships, maybe in the marketplace, maybe in the church ministries. There are all kinds of arenas where He has given you an assignments. There are a lot of folks who are diligent as long as people are approving and watching and looking. However, when no one is looking, and it gets hard, they kind of look right and look left and are not diligent. The Lord would say, “It is really about loving Me.”

When I began to see that some time ago, I thought, “My heart is strangely warmed in some of the difficult parts because I know You like it, and I like You. Wow, if You really know that I am doing it because I love You, then I can do it! I can do this a lot just as long as I know You are looking and that You are remembering.”

Some people think of denying our sinful lusts. That is one part of the theater in which we express our love to God. When people think about lust, some think that lust is only sexual immorality. They think that is lust. Well, there is lust in that, but lust includes a lot more than that. It includes covetousness and the way we handle our money in right ways and wrong ways. Anger, bitterness, retaliation, I mean, in the body of Christ, “That guy on the worship team did that, and I am going to teach him a lesson. He is going to find out that he is not going to get away with that!”

The Lord would say, “No! That is a lust. Deny that lust, and I will take it personally that you are loving Me.” Bitterness, complaining, slander—denying those—holding our speech, bringing it into agreement with God

because we love Him and we know that He notices. The Lord would say, “That is the theater in which I have called you to love Me.”

And I think, “Well, Lord, why don’t you just make it at a worship service, and if I cry at the worship service and stay really focused and do not really look at my phone or anything, will You count that as obedience?”

He would say, “Well, I want you to show it to me in these other ways, and I will take it personally. I will remember it, and I will reward it forever, even a cup of cold water that you give away. Because I take it personally as the way that you love Me.”

- I. Each of us has a different struggle according to our own personality and life circumstances. Thus, we each have a different “assignment,” from which we offer our gift of obedient love to God. Our love (and resistance of sinful lusts) is often weak and flawed, but it is still valued and honored by the Lord. Weak love is still real love—it is genuine. Our love is not only real when it is mature.

Each person, every individual, has a different struggle which is according to our personality and according to our life circumstances. We each have a different assignment in which we offer our gift of love to God. Every person in this room, even the people in the same household have different personalities and a different struggle. They have an assignment that is unique to them. I am just thinking about me, you think about you, and the Lord says, as it were, “I have called you to do this and this and this, and you have this and this as setbacks and challenges, etc. You love Me in that assignment and that is your gift of love to Me.”

We all want somebody else’s assignment because we are imagining that that guy’s assignment is easier, but I have learned over the years that everyone’s assignment has real challenges in it. The way their personality is—some people are more prone to fear in this way or their addictions in that way or life looks this way or it is that way. And the Lord would say, “That is the assignment I have given you to offer your gift of love to Me. Do it that way, and you will not be disappointed when I answer you on that day.”

Well, our resistance of sinful lusts, whether it is sexual immorality, or some kind of substance abuse or whether it is anger or bitterness or retaliation or whether it is just slander and complaining—there are all kinds of lusts—often our resistance of that as a sincere believer is weak, meaning we are not great at it. You know we are really set not to do it, we stumble, set again, stumble, set our heart again, and stumble. Our resistance is weak, and our love is weak. Our love is flawed, but I have good news for you: weak love is still real love. It is still genuine. Your love is not only real when it is mature. Your love is genuine even when it is weak. And so we still offer it to the Lord because it moves Him. So do not say, “Well, yes, but you know I have stumbled so much!” He sees you get up and declare war on it. That is love. It really matters when you turn away that lustful desire to slander because, again, take lust out of just the category of immorality. It is all of these, the lusts of the flesh, our natural desire to give expression to things that are dark emotions, dark thoughts and dark actions.

- J. Various expressions of loving God—**purity** (refusing immorality, anger, slander, etc.), **generosity**, **humility** (refusing to be defensive, etc.), **gratitude** (refusing to complain, etc.), **diligence**, etc.,

I listed just five expressions here. We could have ten. I just put a few here, and my point here is to give you some practical ways that you show love to the Lord. In your purity—for example, resisting anger is a type of purity. In your humility—refusing to be defensive is a type of loving God that is humility. Someone has come and corrected you, though they do not have a right spirit, and they do not even have all the right information, but you answer by receiving it with a kind heart and teachable heart; you do not have to believe it all, but you act in kindness. The Lord says, “That is your love for Me! You just loved Me!” I have other ways as well, and that list could be ten. I just wanted to break it down to everyday life choices that really matter to Him. When I

see they matter to Him, it moves me. I want to do it if it moves Him. If He notices and remembers, I am in. If He does not really care, and nobody cares except for the guy I am bugging with my bad behavior or my bad words, nobody else matters, then, “Hey, I might as well!”

The Lord would say, “No, do not view life that way! Obey My commands, with your speech, your body, your time, with your diligence in service even if they do not appreciate you. Obey Me because I commanded you to do it.”

- K. Affection-based obedience is the most reliable—compared to duty-based or fear-based obedience. The King in Song of Solomon described His Bride’s heart of loyal love as a “locked garden” (4:12). The Bride described herself as lovesick (5:8). “*We must be lovesick to be love safe*”—Yo Herman.

¹²***A garden locked is My sister, My bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed. (Song 4:12; ESV)***

Affection-based obedience is the strongest and most reliable type of obedience. Especially in the generation the Lord returns when darkness, sinful perversion, and demonic activity is going to reach unprecedented levels in human history. The rage, persecution against the body of Christ, and temptation of the human race is going to a place far beyond any time in history. However, I am telling you that weak and broken people—there will be a billion of them, that is a made-up number of course, but—I mean the end-time Church is going to be victorious. People like you and me are going to be empowered to walk in a supernatural grace to obey God. It is remarkable.

And I call it affection-based obedience as it is more reliable when compared to duty-based or fear-based obedience. What do we mean by duty-based obedience? Duty-based obedience is “the Bible says this is your responsibility and you ought to do it.” You know it is your responsibility and you should do it. That is biblical. There are things we do because we should.

And there is fear-based obedience, and that is biblical too. If you do not do this, you are in trouble, and it will cost you. That wakes up a lot of folks—fear-based obedience—and it is biblical. If you step across these lines your life will be far more difficult in these ways.

Duty, that is good, but the best kind of obedience is affection-based. That is the strongest. That is the most reliable. It is where you feel His affection a little bit, and you feel affection for Him. That is what makes obedience pleasurable—when it is affection-based.

This is depicted so clearly in the Song of Solomon. The king in Song of Solomon is King Solomon. and he has the Shulamite maiden who becomes his bride. The spiritual interpretation of Song of Solomon is King Jesus and His people, the redeemed in the body of Christ and His redeemed throughout history.

So the king is describing the heart of the loyal love of his bride. He says this fantastic sentence, “Your heart is like a locked garden.” That is, your heart is locked even in all of these other influences and you are not moved, you are not yielding. A locked garden in this is beautiful. It is a garden that is locked, and all the wild beasts and all of the strangers and defiling elements cannot get into your heart! “Look at you!” He is honoring her, “You are a locked garden! You are a spring that is locked. A fountain that is sealed, there is no defilement in it. Those fountains in that garden, you are not letting anything polluted in there!” This is this romantic poetic language of her loyal love.

⁸***...daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him I am lovesick! (Song 5:8)***

Then later on in the next chapter, chapter 5, we get insight into how she lived as a locked garden. She says, “I am lovesick, that is the truth! When no one is looking, I want His affection. I want to feel it more and give it more! That is where I live. That is my daydream: His affection receiving it and giving it.”

I love what Yo Herman said. Yo is one of our leaders here at IHOPKC. He said, “We must be lovesick to be love-safe.” I thought that was so great! I just stole it right there when he said it in one of our meetings. In the generation of the greatest persecution and the greatest temptation, a billion believers can be lovesick and therefore love-safe. And we are thinking, “Man, I don’t feel that safe right now,” but we are at the beginning of a time where we are going to see an increase of the revelation of His love. The spirit of grace and the power of God are going to increase.

III. THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT IN GOD’S END-TIME PLANS

- A. John made a stunning prophetic declaration that the end-time Church will be a “prepared Bride” (Rev. 19:7). God’s ultimate purpose for creation is to provide an equally yoked Bride for Jesus. The Father is raising up a *prepared Bride for His worthy Son*. The greatest social miracle in history is the transformation of the end-time Church from spiritual compromise to be a prepared Bride. The power of love is Jesus’ “secret weapon” that He will release in an unprecedented measure.

7...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)

The Lord knows what He is doing, and He has a His secret weapon actually. The Lord has a secret weapon for the end-time Church that Satan completely underestimates. That is the revelation and impartation of love. He is going to reveal Jesus as a Bridegroom King, not just a King with power, but also a Bridegroom with burning desire. The Church has not seen that much of Jesus that way. He is not just going to reveal affection, He is going to impart it into the Church, and the Church is going to feel love in a stronger way than at any other time in history.

And Satan completely underestimates it. He does not think it is going to work. He is looking at six thousand years of human history saying, “I can outrun them any day on this. Wait and see!”

The Lord would say, “Read the prophetic scripture, when I return”—look at Revelation 19; this is so stunning that John saw this—“the Church is going to be a prepared Bride, a matured Bride ready for her wedding day and equally yoked in love.”

Satan looks at that and says, “That is not going to happen! Look at history! It has never happened.”

The Lord would say, “You wait and see. I have some surprises in my end-time strategies,” That is kind of a crazy way to say it, “My secret weapon.” It is not really secret as it is all over the Bible. “My secret weapon is that I am going to reveal and impart love at a level that has never, ever happened in history.”

God’s ultimate purpose for creation is to provide an eternal companion, a bride that is equally yoked to Him in love. That has been His plan from the beginning. And the greatest social miracle in history is the transformation of the end-time Church from a Laodicean spirit of compromise to a prepared bride. That is going to happen within the span of one generation. And I believe we are in the early days of that beginning to increase and unfold even now. I love to say this the Father is raising up a prepared bride for a worthy Son, and the enemy will not stop Him, and it is going to be people like you and me and the folks over there all over the earth. He is going to touch us! He is going to reveal and impart love and affection to us.

- B. The book of Revelation is about the most glorious love story ever imagined in which Jesus releases His judgments against the Antichrist's empire—while orchestrating the greatest revival (“the billion soul harvest;” 7:9), the supernatural transformation of the end-time Church from a Laodicean spirit of compromise to a prepared Bride (19:7), and the deliverance and salvation of all Israel (12:13-17), followed by Jesus filling the whole earth with God's glory in the millennial kingdom (20:4-6).

¹⁴The woman [remnant of Israel] was given two wings...that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for [3½ years]...from the presence of the serpent. (Rev. 12:14)

The book of Revelation is the most glorious love story every imagined. People read the book of Revelation and say “Oh! I am so afraid!”

I respond with, “You are reading it through the wrong lens!”

“Well look at these terrible events!”

Those are judgments against the Antichrist Empire! Jesus is at war because He is planning a wedding! He is at war for a bride and a wedding! The judgements are not against the Church. They are against the great oppressor. In His judgments, Jesus is removing everything that hinders love. While He is pouring out His judgments on the Antichrist Empire, He is orchestrating the greatest revival ever: the supernatural transformation of the end-time Church and the deliverance and salvation of all of Israel. And Jesus is going to follow this by filling the earth with the glory of God when He returns. The whole earth is going to be filled with the glory of God. That is what comes after Jesus returns.

Now when we look at the deliverance and salvation of Israel, I will point out just one of those four things that I wrote here. In Revelation 12, John saw a woman, and the woman is clearly the remnant of Israel at the end of the age. This woman is being persecuted by the Antichrist and Gentile nations. A portion of the Jews—the percentage we do not know—escape into the wilderness. There are several different views of where that wilderness is and what that looks like, but that is not for us to discuss for right now. However, here is the point: she is nourished by the Lord and protected from the rage of Satan during that time.

¹⁴“...I will allure her [Israel], will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her.

¹⁵...she shall sing there...¹⁶you will call Me ‘My Husband’...” (Hos. 2:14-16)

John is very familiar with Hosea. Hosea was the first one who spoke about Israel going to the wilderness at the end of the age. In Hosea 2, look what it says verse 14, because these two passages go together. You will only understand Revelation 12 if you understand Hosea 2, and you put the two together, which John clearly did. God says, in effect, “I am going to allure Israel. I am going to wow her and win her. I am going to show her things that are going to fascinate her heart about who I am and what I am going to do with her.” This is unbelieving Israel that has escaped into the wilderness and fled persecution. “I am going to bring her to the wilderness.” That is the very wilderness John is talking about in chapter 12 of Revelation. “I am going to speak comfort to her and she is going to sing, even in the wilderness! Even before the return of the Lord, even in the months leading up to it, she will be singing new songs!”

How is God going to speak to Israel in the wilderness? One thing is that He will speak to her supernaturally: dreams, visions and all kinds of things, undoubtedly with angelic encounters. Another thing is He will speak to Israel through your voice, through your songs, and she will sing songs, even in the wilderness. That is a big subject here which I cannot spend time on, but I love it and I just wanted you to say “Whoa!” if you are unfamiliar with this.

Here is what they are going to sing: this is the Lord speaking to Israel, “You will call Me Husband!”

Israel is thinking, “What? We thought You were the sovereign, transcendent God, that if we go near You we will die. If we see You, we will die!”

“You will see something you have never seen. You will call Me Husband. I will betroth you to Me forever! Yes, you heard Me right, I will betroth You to Me in righteousness, kindness, and mercy!”

The implication is the first commandment loving God with all of her heart, feeling loved and loving in return. That is right at the centerpiece of this storyline in the book of Revelation.

- C. Jesus’ plan in the book of Revelation is so glorious that it results in the end-time Church loving Him—more than physical life (12:11)—the saints will overcome Satan *spiritually* by loving Jesus even unto death. Satan and the Antichrist will overcome saints *physically* by martyrdom (Rev. 13:7)

¹¹And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Rev. 12:11)

*Jesus’ plan in the book of Revelation is so glorious. It is so glorious. Again, the negative is against the Antichrist kingdom. There is persecution, but there are 403 verses in the book of Revelation, and there are only twelve verses about the people of God being persecuted. Three percent of the book of Revelation is about persecution. Most of the book of Revelation is about God’s vindicating His people and breaking in to intervene to stop the oppressor through the prayers of the saints and all of these other things. It is a glorious storyline. I mean, it is a **glorious** storyline, and it is going to be so moving that the end-time Church will love Him.*

As a matter of fact, Revelation 12 is the very same passage that we just read from about Israel being like the woman who went into the wilderness and was nurtured that I just read in the last paragraph. He is talking in verse 11 about how the saints are going to overcome Satan. Satan does not believe this for one moment. He is not expecting this and he has no idea the significance of the power of love. He has never seen it, and it has never been shown in human history on this scale, the power of love. Jesus is going to reveal His love and then impart His love into the people to give back to Him. It is going to be supernatural. It takes God to love God. They are going to overcome Satan so much so—look at the end of verse 11—they will lose their life gladly before they would deny the Lord. Even at the threat of death they will be lovesick; they will be loyal in love even in the face of death.

Right now it is natural in our normal human thinking to think of future persecution with, “Oh my goodness, Lord!” and the Lord would say, “You do not know how much I am going to help you.” These overcomers are not super saints. They are folk, they are people like us, but I have a surprise: there is going to be a revelation and an impartation of love that is more than you think.

It is interesting that the saints will overcome Satan spiritually because they will not yield to his threats even if they die. They will say “Die? I die? He is the resurrection! In one second I will be in His glorious presence! I am not going to back away from that! I am not afraid of you! I am not afraid of dying.” They overcome Satan spiritually.

It is interesting that in the next chapter, 13:7, Satan overcomes them physically through persecution and martyrdom, but they overcome him spiritually because they do not yield to it. They do not yield to fear, but they say, “We love Him! It is worth it! He is worthy! Are you kidding? One moment I’m dead, and I am forever in the presence of indescribably beauty forever!” Satan is not counting on this.

- D. Revelation 22:17 is one of the most informative and significant prophecies describing what truths and activities the Spirit will emphasize in the generation the Lord returns. The body of Christ will love Jesus as their Bridegroom King resulting in them walking in their identity as a cherished Bride.

¹⁷*The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”*...²⁰*“I am coming quickly...”* (Rev. 22:17, 20)

More in the “book of Revelation” storyline is in chapter 22:17. I call this one of the most significant and informative end-time prophecies. There are so many levels of application to this one sentence. I remember giving a message once where I gave the 15—not that there are only 15 but—15 implications to what this sentence means: “The Spirit and the Bride will say come!” I mean, that will affect the worship movement, the songs that are written, the sermons that are talked about and preached, what they will talk about in conversations at family gatherings. It will be the type of leadership. There are so many implications to this sentence.

The Body of Christ will love Jesus, and they will see Him, not only as a King with power, but also as a Bridegroom with desire for relationship. They will say, “You are a lovesick Bridegroom with all power. You are a Bridegroom King, and we see who we are for the first time. We are a cherished bride. We are not just weak and broken people. We are cherished by the most powerful and beautiful King that has ever been conceived of in human history and we are Your eternal companion forever!” Beloved, that is going to shift the emotional chemistry of the body of Christ, to see this more and more and more.

E. For the first time the Spirit will universally emphasize the Church’s identity as Jesus’ Bride.

For the first time in two thousand years of Church history, the Spirit is going to reveal Jesus as a Bridegroom universally. The Bible has always been clear that He is a Bridegroom, but the Spirit has never universally emphasized it. And when the Church sees Jesus as a Bridegroom with passion for His people, they will see themselves as a cherished bride. It has never happened in history. There has always been a little group here or there throughout Church history that has seen a little bit of this. However, this is the Spirit on the Church in her **bridal identity** worldwide in unity with the Holy Spirit saying, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

F. The Church can pray, “Come, Lord Jesus, as a Bridegroom!” in three different ways:

We can pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” as a Bridegroom because when a bride says, “Come,” this is calling Him forth as a Bridegroom King, not just as a king. We can pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” in three ways. We can say:

Come **near** us. That is intimacy with God now and the breakthrough in our heart. Come **to** us, and that is revival or breakthrough in our region or our city. Come **for** us, and that is the historical. eschatological breakthrough when He comes in the sky. We can pray all three of those prayers.

1. **Come NEAR US in intimacy** (individual breakthrough of our heart in God).
2. **Come TO US in revival** (regional or national breakthrough of the Spirit in revival).
3. **Come FOR US in the sky** (historical breakthrough of the second coming of Jesus).

G. **Bridegroom revival:** Jesus will come to His people as a Bridegroom who want Him with all their heart. The end-time “Bridegroom revival” will be far more invasive than any revival in history. Jesus will reveal and impart His love in an unprecedented way that will transform the Church.

The Bridegroom revival is just a term I use. It is not a biblical term, but it is a biblical idea. I believe that there is going to be one time in human history because the Spirit has never revealed Jesus to a billion people as a Bridegroom. Most of the body of Christ even today see Him as a King with power and a Savior that forgives, and some believe He is a healer who touches our bodies and some economic miracles here and there. He is all of those, but He is more!

It is not the Spirit and the army. It is the Spirit and the Bride saying, “Come!” Yes, we are the army, we are the family, we are the kingdom, but only one time in history does the Church see herself as a bride universally across the body of Christ worldwide.

Well, this end-time revival is far different than all of the revivals of history—this Bridegroom end-time revival. I have been a student of revivals and in most of the revivals of the two thousand years that I have studied mostly people are coming to salvation and becoming born again. They are seeing the power of God touch them, and they see Jesus as their Savior and then give their lives to Him.

And then the second thing that happens, the revival, if it stays powerful for some years, raises up a dedicated work force. People become dedicated servants of the Lord. They will witness and do anything as they are a dedicated workforce. Some revivals, not very many, had the extra added dimension of holiness. Most of the revivals lost that aspect pretty quickly, but they had it for a while. Mostly it was people being born again and becoming a dedicated workforce.

The Spirit could say, “Something is coming never seen in history! It is a Bridegroom revival!” A Bridegroom revival means He is coming after our hearts. “It is not just that I want you as My workforce. I do not just want you in heaven. I want all of you now in this age! I am coming after your heart. I am coming after your heart. I am going to show you My heart like no time in history, ever, or in any other revival but it is going to be an invasive revival. He says “I want your time, your money, I want everything about you!” He is not just a king with power looking for a workforce. He is a Bridegroom with desire, invasively coming after everything that we are about. That is what the end-time revival is going to look like.

- H. The Spirit is raising up His messengers who will reveal the heart of Jesus as the Bridegroom King and will call others to determine to make loving Jesus the primary focus of their life and ministry.

¹⁴Because he has set his love upon Me...because he has known My name. (Ps. 91:14)

My point tonight in this message is to raise up messengers. Well, I want to stir hearts, but one of my main points is that I believe the Holy Spirit is raising up messengers about this message. To see it in the book, to see it in John 13-17—I mean five times in John 14, love and obedience are married together—no other theme is emphasized that much in John 13-17. I mean you see the signs of it all through the book of Revelation. When you see it through the lens of a bride, you see the book of Revelation as a love story, not as a horror story, but as a glorious love story!

Holy Spirit is raising up messengers, and here is what they are going to do: they are going to reveal the cherishing heart of Jesus. Again, He does not only have power and authority, He cherishes us tenderly. In Ephesians 5, Paul said, “He will cherish and nourish His [end-time] Church. He will show His tender, cherishing heart as a Bridegroom.” This is going to change the body of Christ. He is going to raise up messengers that proclaim the Ephesians 5:29 message where Jesus cherishes His Church and cleanses her with the washing of the water of the word and messengers who call others to define loving Jesus as the highest priority. The absolute highest priority.

They will make encountering His heart the number one focus of their life and ministry. Now that might sound obvious, but it is not obvious. I remember way back in 1990, thirty years ago. I remember being at a regular conference and preaching on the first commandment. You know the first commandment: Jesus said, “Love Me with all of your heart, this is first!” I remember a very well-known and prestigious seminary professor who had written many books and had been in ministry many years coming up to me and saying, “I have to tell you something. I have been a seminary professor for years, I have written books, I am a scholar knowing Hebrew

and Greek, and I have heard thousands of sermons all my life.” And then he said something that was shocking to me “I have never one time heard a message on the first commandment, ever.”

I did not do the, “Oh my gosh, you old sinner!” I did not do that, but I just said, “Really?” as it just startled me. He said, “Never, once!”

I remember going and speaking at some mega-church in Brazil, with some forty thousand people in the church, with several services each week. The pastor had been in ministry for forty years. I taught on the first commandment, and he came to me and said, “Forty years, this is the first! I missed it! I have never done this!” He said, “Lord, I do not know how many years I have left, but I have to realign to this!”

And those are just two little examples in my little world, and my point is that to a lot of you this is normal in your thinking, like, “Of course I am going to proclaim this message as first!” but I do not think it is all that normal. However, it is going to become normal because He is going to raise up messengers like you who say, “This is first!” This is not like, well, “Let’s get anointed for the revival and then we will get around to loving God if we get time.” No! This is what it is all about! Because we are going to love God before the revival, during the revival, and after the revival. it is the same priority: to love Him first. That is first! We are not waiting for revival in order to love Him. And we are going to love Him in the revival, and then when the revival is over, we are going to love Him. That is the thing we are called to!

IV. JESUS’ FINAL WORDS—OF HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY & AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

- A. Jesus’ final words to the Church after His resurrection are seen in His messages to the 7 churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3). He corrected the churches in Ephesus, Sardis, Laodicea for neglecting His primary message to love Him and to overcome spiritual dullness. He honored how the church in Ephesus served Him but insisted that they repent by returning to love Him as they did in their early days.

⁴...I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” (Rev. 2:4)

I want you to notice the significance of Jesus’ last words. The last words of His earthly ministry and then the last words after His resurrection. Sixty years later He appears to John on the Island of Patmos—they say sixty years, nobody knows for sure, but John is elderly—and Jesus’ last words are the book of Revelation.

His last words are very, very telling and insightful. He speaks to the seven churches of Asia. These are His last words in the Bible to the Church, these messages to the seven churches. I call it, “the Church after God’s own heart.” I did a twelve-part series¹ on this a couple of years ago, working through every line. This is what Jesus would say to the Church. We want to form our ministries around those seven messages. However, it is important to understand that He corrected three of those churches. He said, “You are serving Me, you are working hard, but you do not love Me like you used to. And I have this against you. I do honor you for serving Me. You are a faithful workforce, but you do not love Me like you used to.” And that was His last message, those messages to the seven churches to the body of Christ.

- B. On Friday, six days before Passover (the following Thursday night; Jn 12:1)—Jesus honored Mary’s expression of extravagant love by pouring costly perfume on Him (Jn. 12:2-8; Mk. 14:3-9).

¹Then, six days [Friday] before the Passover...³...she [Mary] broke the flask and poured it on His head...⁶Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for

¹ https://mikebickle.org/series/The-Seven-Churches-in-Revelation-2_3

Me...⁹Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." (Mk. 14:1-9)

Let's go back to His earthly ministry. On Friday, six days before the Passover, which was the following Thursday night, Mary of Bethany pours this costly oil on Him. Just six days before the Last Supper on the Thursday night that we have been talking about in John 13-17. And in Mark 14, she breaks the oil—we have the John 12 version and then Mark 14—what it says is that when she broke the vial and poured the costly oil upon His head, they said "We could have used this money for the poor!"

In verse 6, Jesus said, "Leave her alone, she has done good for Me! As a matter of fact"—verse 9—"everywhere the gospel will go, what this woman has done in her extravagant love to Me will be highlighted!" And so Jesus is saying, "This is what extravagant love means to Me!" He vindicated her.

As a matter of fact, Mary of Bethany to my knowledge is the only person in the gospels Jesus vindicated publicly two times. First Martha said, "My little sister, Mary, is sitting at your feet!"

Jesus said, "You are troubled. Leave Mary alone; she has done the good thing."

That is in Luke 10, and here in Mark 14, He vindicates her again. Twice in front of the apostles He vindicates her. I mean I do not know if He ever vindicated one of them, but I know that He really loved the devotion of this girl. She is never found in the book of Acts, never known in the Church history in revivals. However, the Lord said, "I want you to know," and He said it six days as one of the last things He did before He died, six days before the Last Supper. He said, "I want you to know how I feel about this kind of love."

- C. On Tuesday, in Jesus' last public message, He spoke of the King preparing a wedding for His son (Mt. 22:1). Then He spoke on the end times presenting Himself as Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Mt.24-25). Jesus is a King with power, a Bridegroom with desire for relationship, and a Judge with zeal to remove all that hinders love. He emphasized cultivating the "oil of intimacy" (Mt. 25:1-13).

²The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, ³and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding...⁸The wedding is ready... (Mt. 22:2-8)

Now it is a few days after that event with Mary, and so now we are back to Tuesday and His last public message before He goes to the cross. Somebody might ask, "I wonder what Jesus would say if He had one more message?"

I would say, "I know what He would say. It is Matthew 22!" Here it is, and this is it. After Matthew 22, He stands in front of the people, and He had never said this publicly. He is in Jerusalem, it is Tuesday, and He is going to go to the Last Supper on Thursday.

His last message, He stands up and says, "Let me tell you something I have never told you before! The kingdom of God is like a King arranging a marriage for His Son. My Father is the King, I am the Son, and there is a marriage being planned, and the wedding is ready because I am going to pay the price in three days on Friday. I am going to pay the price for this bride, I am going to purchase her with My own blood."

¹Then the kingdom...shall be likened to ten virgins who...went out to meet the bridegroom...

⁴the wise took oil...⁶At midnight a cry was heard: "Behold, the bridegroom is coming..."

⁹The wise answered saying, "...go to those who sell, and buy [oil] for yourselves." (Mt. 25:1-9)

Later on that day, that very same day on Tuesday, He spoke of Himself. It is the great end-time message of Matthew 24 and 25. Jesus' most prominent, detailed end-time message, two chapters Matthew 24 and 25. It is still on Tuesday, and now He is only talking to the apostles in private. He presents Himself as a Bridegroom, a

King and a Judge. You can look at that later. We have other messages on that where we break it down. He said “I am a King with power, I am a Bridegroom with deep desire for My people, and I am a Judge with zeal to confront everything that hinders love and to remove it!” And so He shows Himself as the Bridegroom, King, and Judge.

However, He tells them in the midst of this message in Matthew 24 and 25, “You have to get oil because I am a Bridegroom coming. And when I come back, you have to have the oil of intimacy cultivated in your life. I do not just want faithful service as a workforce. There is an oil of intimacy that will be critical in that day.”

I do not think the apostles fully got it then, but He might have said, “Think back a week ago when Mary poured the oil out. There is some connection to those two things.”

- D. Jesus’ last prophetic declaration over Israel was, “You shall love the Lord” (Mt. 22:37). Moses prophesied Israel would love God with all their heart in the end times (Deut. 30:1-6).

“The Lord...will circumcise your heart...to love the Lord...with all your heart. (Deut. 30:6)

The very last message—and this is still Matthew 22. Jesus started earlier that day and said, “The kingdom of God is like a King arranging a wedding for His Son!”—Later on, just a little bit later, He stood up and declared the prophetic declaration over Israel when He said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart!”

It looks like He is telling them what they ought to do, because a lawyer asked Him the question, “Hey, what is the main thing?”

He said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart!” but He was saying more than you ought to love God. He was actually referencing the prophecy from Deuteronomy 30.

*Deuteronomy 30 is the prophecy Moses gave that, in the generation the Lord returns, Israel is going to supernaturally love God. Their hearts are going to be circumcised. In Jesus’ last prophecy here, first He says, “The kingdom of God is like a King arranging a wedding!” and then a little while later He said, “Israel, you shall love the Lord your God!” Not just “ought to,” yes, ought to but “You **will** by the power of God!” That was His last declaration to Israel, and then He went into private ministry after that.*

- E. We must interpret the 150 chapters on the end times through the lens of a Bridegroom, King, and Judge and His lovesick Bride who is prepared for the eschatological wedding day. We cannot rightly interpret Jesus’ end-time message in Matthew 24-25 without growing in our love for Jesus.

We can only interpret the 150 chapters on the end times in a right way when we see Jesus through the lens of a Bridegroom, King, and Judge. Meaning, we only understand the book-of-Revelation storyline if we see a Bridegroom with deep desire for love that He is going to reveal and impart.

- F. We are to enjoy God by the Spirit as our “home.” Believers will find their “home” in God by living in union with God in obedient love as vessels of His power and presence. Our spiritual capacity to receive and return God's love increases as we increase in our obedient love.

²¹...he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him ...²³We will come to him and make Our home with him. (Jn. 14:21, 23)

Jesus talks about and says, “If you love Me”—and we will talk about this more next week—“you will be loved by My Father, and I will love you, and I will manifest My presence on your heart!” I have a little bit on that here, and we will look at that more next week. “I will come to you. We will make our home with you!” Now it is

a little confusing because He says, “If you love Me, My Father will love you.” and we think, “Well, doesn’t the Father already love us—God so loved the world so He loves everyone?”

Yes, He loves everyone redemptively. He loves the most perverse unbeliever. He loves everyone redemptively, but what He is saying here is that, “I will enjoy the relationship of those who say yes to Me. I will rejoice and delight in the communion and fellowship.” And so it is not the redemptive love where He loves everybody no matter what.

However, when people love Him in return, He is saying, “I enjoy the relationship. I delight in the choices you are making,” and it is love in that other heightened way. It is a different type of thing and not a contradiction that He only loves people who love Him. It is a different expression of love. It is His delight and enjoyment of the relationship.

²⁰...If anyone...opens the door, I will come...and dine with him, and he with Me. (Rev. 3:20)

- G. The Father loves the life choices of His obedient children and enjoys His relationship with them. The Father loves all redemptively (Jn. 3:16) but enjoys the relationship of those who obey.

Amen and amen, let’s stand before the Lord and ask Him to speak to our hearts.

Father, here we are before You. Lord, we say we want to love You with all of our heart. If You can touch those men—and there are no super saints and You are coming for a billion-soul harvest that will be like a prepared bride in the most sinful, dark generation in history—then Lord here I am. If You can touch them, then You can touch me.

I am going to ask You, Father, as You said anything I ask You that You would give to us. I am asking You for a greater anointing, a greater grace to love You. I am asking You and believing You, Father, using the prayer of faith to see love grow in my heart. Not just to see circumstances blessed, that too, of course, but I want to see love grow in my heart, so I ask You, Abba, right now. I am asking You. All across this room, we are agreeing with this prayer: would You allow us to grow in love that results in even greater obedience because we love You? We say here we are in our weakness. Lord, we know that weak love is still real love. We know that You see the cry of our heart and are asking You for a greater measure of Grace. Here we are, Lord.

I want to pray for folks, that the Lord has been stirring you just in the last weeks even about being a messenger of calling people to the first commandment as first. Not just power, not just blessing, but the commandment to love God as the first priority. You are saying “I want to lock into that! I will preach that other stuff too, but this is going to be first.” If the Lord has been stirring you recently, I would like you to come here, and I want to ask Him to increase that.

I remember in 1988, when the Lord spoke to me in a very dramatic way with the Song of Solomon, when He said, “I want you to make this the priority of your life,” and I couldn’t hardly understand what He meant, but I said, “Lord help me to do this! Make this my number one message: to reveal and leading to the impartation of Your affections.”

Singers and musicians, media missionaries, blogs, social media, discipling young people, children’s church workers, house church leaders, this is your number one message, and you are saying “That is it Lord!” Here I am Lord!” Beloved it is not too late to start. The enemy tells people you have gone too far, that it is too late, you are disqualified! That is a lie! Today is the day. Today is the new day for you. Today is a new day for you!

Lord, we want a heart that is fully in love! We want to impart this message to people! Give us dreams, visions, and give us living understanding and impartation!

Lord, I ask for the Spirit of grace right now, I ask for a messenger anointing to come on them in a new way. Media messengers, new songs, new music, new curriculum to disciple children. Holy Spirit, raise up messengers in this house unashamedly calling people to the first commandment as first! Lord, we ask for fullness. Come touch our hearts, Lord, like a mighty rushing wind. Come and touch us.

It takes God to love God! Flow like a river, Lord! We want to love as You love! We want to walk as You walk, Jesus. Come, Holy Spirit, in power, right now, we ask!