

Reassurance of Christ's Love When Doubts Assail You #2

Song of Solomon 8:6-7; Ephesians 3:17-19

August 16, 2020

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It is not wrong or a sign of weakness of faith to desire to be reassured of Christ's love for you, dear Christian. It is, in fact, an evidence of God's work of grace within you that you hunger to be reassured and persuaded of the infinite, unchangeable, redemptive love of the Lord Jesus.

It is, indeed, our sin to distrust the many expressions, promises, and evidences of His love for us. It is a sin to trust our feelings over His divine trustworthiness and love. But it is not a sin to fervently desire the Lord Jesus to reassure you of His unfathomable love, especially when you are passing through the wilderness of temptations, afflictions, sorrows, delays, and losses. That is exactly what you will do as a growing Christian who loves the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The love of Jesus implanted in you desires daily expressions and assurances of that love as you commune with Him in prayer and in His Word.

I dare say that a husband or wife that does not want to be reassured of the love of his/her beloved spouse in word and deed has become cold and indifferent in marital love. For, dear ones, love begets love. It is not a chore for a husband who loves his wife to cheerfully reassure her of his love in word and deed (or vice versa). It is an honor and pleasure to do so with one whom you truly love. Likewise, it is not a heavy burden for Jesus to reassure you of His love for you, but a delight and pleasure to do so. Is that your plea and heart's desire?

We continue with Part 2 to last week's sermon and continue looking at two more descriptions of divine love which supply reasons why the bride so earnestly desires to be reassured of Christ's love: (1) The Jealousy of Christ's Love (Song 8:6); (2) The Fervency of Christ's Love (Song 8:6).

I. The Jealousy of Christ's Love (Song 8:6).

A. Review.

1. The bride knowing the struggle she has in sensing the love of Christ when she is passing through great trials pleads with Jesus to assure her of His amazing love by setting her before Him as a seal upon His heart and affections and as a seal upon His arm and almighty power. This is simply her prayer that Jesus would always remember her and the covenant of love into which He has brought her. She is pleading with Jesus to reassure her of the promises He has made to her (Isaiah 49:14-16). To do this is not presumption or unbelief, but is exercising faith in God's promises, which are all Yea and Amen in Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20).

2. Then the elect bride begins to describe Christ's love for her and His love implanted in her. This description of divine love is 5-fold and provides for us reasons why she so earnestly pleads to be reassured of His love for her. We first considered The Strength of Christ's Love: "for love is strong as death" (Song 8:6). Death conquers all creatures, but the love of Jesus for you, His elect, conquered even death in His bodily resurrection. A dead Jesus can save no one, but a resurrected Jesus conquers sin, death, and condemnation and freely grants forgiveness, righteousness, and everlasting life. The next description of Christ's love for His elect bride is The Jealousy of Christ's Love.

B. We usually do not view jealousy in a favorable light, for as a vice it is suspicious and distrustful without sufficient reason, and it seeks to control those it claims to love.

1. This is an ungodly jealousy in which one smothers another with his/her presence so that one cannot take a step without explaining why that step was taken. Sinful jealousy is contrary to love for biblical love "thinketh no evil...beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Corinthians 13:5,7).

2. Ungodly jealousy is actually idolatry, for the jealous person makes the one it claims to

love to be a god or goddess that everyone else is seeking to take from him/her. Whereas the covetous person sinfully desires to possess what belongs to another (idolatry), the jealous person sinfully desires to possess what is already his/hers and suspects without good reason that all manner of people are seeking to rob him/her of that loved one (idolatry). The more jealous a person is, the more distrusting one becomes and the tighter the grip becomes in controlling the one that is claimed to be love.

3. This is a sin for which we must repent. We cannot grasp so tightly to anyone or anything in this life so that that person or thing becomes our life and reason for living, so that we cannot live without that person or thing (Philippians 1:21). The jealous person in this sense is not truly loving with a biblical love. He/She is loving the creature more than the Creator. He/She is actually destroying biblical love, which begins with loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and then loving our neighbor as ourself. Sinful jealousy is not caring for others—it is about caring for one's own self—not truly loving others, but loving self.

4. Is there a sinful jealousy in you that feels threatened because your spouse has a close friend? Is every other friend a rival to you? Is there a sinful jealousy in your marriage in which your spouse's love for Jesus Christ becomes a rival to you? Biblical love in the home does not smother the one loved or seek to control the one loved, but rather sacrifices oneself to serve the one loved and sets an example: follow me as I follow Jesus. To desire your spouse to submit to Christ's lordship is not controlling or a sinful jealousy—it is a godly jealousy. It is, however, not your job to change your spouse—that is the work of Jesus. Repeated correction will build walls, whereas love, prayer, and living out your faith will take down walls.

C. As a godly virtue, the jealousy of love is a holy desire that the one loved would be loyal and faithful in his/her love to Christ and to you.

1. God has such a holy jealousy of love (Exodus 34:14). He rightly should have your supreme love, devotion, faithfulness, loyalty, and obedience. As your Creator and Redeemer, He is jealous for that first place in your love and affections—which you evidence by your loving communion, worship, meditation, and obedience. To say God is jealous for that first place in our lives is not to say that when we fall away that He is dejected, discouraged, or despondent. God is always unchangeable.

2. Likewise, Paul had a holy jealousy for the believers in Corinth that they would continue to embrace the true gospel of salvation and not be misled by false teachers (2 Corinthians 11:2-4). If a minister does not have a holy jealousy for his flock, he does not love his flock.

3. In this godly sense of jealousy, every husband and wife should earnestly desire their spouse to have a loving faithfulness to that marriage covenant that united them—not a supreme faithfulness to one another, but a loving faithfulness under the supreme love and faithfulness to Jesus Christ and His truth. The biblical jealousy of love is not controlling others, but serving them and teaching them by your words and deeds to supremely obey Jesus Christ, to follow you as you follow Jesus, and to desire their love and faithfulness to be realized in your marriage. Marriages in which husbands and wives do not guard jealously time with one another, not only in intimacy, but in friendship will find many other rivals vying for their time and affection.

D. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave" (Song 8:6).

1. Does this describe the love of Christ for us and His love implanted within us? Yes, it does; but with one change in the translation from Hebrew into English. "Jealousy is HARD as the grave." In other words, the jealousy of Christ's love is hard (firm, steadfast) as the grave. Just as the grave does not let go those committed to it, so the jealousy of Christ's love is so firm, steadfast, and loyal to those that are loved with His everlasting love that it will not let them go. The grave will sooner let its captives go than the love of Jesus will let go those captured by His amazing grace. What a graphic picture painted here for us as to the absolute faithfulness of Jesus to keep His spiritual marital covenant with His elect bride. No one or nothing can break that unbreakable bond of Christ's love. Christ is jealous of his people. He will not let another have you,

His beloved spouse. The question is will you exchange Him for a greater love in your life? We are so concerned about His unchangeable love, but is it rather our love for Him for which we should be concerned.

2. The foundation of your faithfulness to Him is His faithfulness to you—the jealousy of His love for you. He will never let you, His elect bride, go. It's impossible (John 10:27-30)! Praise God for the pure jealousy of Christ's love.

II. The Fervency of Christ's Love (Song 8:6).

A. The elect bride now gives another description of the Lord's love for her with which she thirsts to be reassured. Christ's love is described as being hot and fervent for His precious bride (His Church), like the heat of coals on a burning bonfire. Christ's love is the hottest fire imaginable ("a most vehement flame" is literally "a flame of Jah"). It's a fire that no man can put out.

1. Our love for Jesus may weaken, fail, or grow cold, but His love for us, His elect, never changes, weakens, fails, or grows cold or even lukewarm. There may be times in which you do not feel the heat of Christ's love for you, but that is just a feeling, because the heat of His love can no more change than Jesus Himself can change (Hebrews 13:8; Malachi 3:6). Jesus would have to cease to be Jesus for the heat of His love for you to change a single degree. Your love and mine may change from day to day (from hour to hour), but His love is immutable—it's impossible that His love for His beloved bride could change in the least. That's the truth.

2. When you do not sense the fervency of Christ's love, do you believe and trust in what you feel or do you trust in what He has said in His Word and what He has demonstrated in His death and resurrection (1 John 4:10)? And if you understand the redemptive love of Jesus for you who trust in Him, then you will love Jesus and will love with the heat of Christ's love your family at home and your church family (1 John 4:11). The Lord says that those who fail to love their brother or sister are merely pretending that they love God (1 John 4:20). This is not a love in word OR deed, but a love in word AND deed.

B. Remember that Nebuchadnezzar's furnace was heated seven times hotter than usual for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego because the heat of their love for God was greater than the love for their own lives. That fire of Nebuchadnezzar subsequently cooled and died out. However, Christ's love for His elect is hotter than Nebuchadnezzar's fire and it will never cool or die out for you, His elect bride.

1. What was in the bride that lit that fire of His love to such a great degree? Nothing, except her harlotry, unfaithfulness, and corruption. There was no reason why Jesus should love any of us, except for His grace and mercy.

2. What is the fuel that keeps the fire and fervency of His love burning for you, His elect? Is it your faith, love, and obedience? No! Every speck of the fuel comes from His mercy bound to us in His Covenant of Grace. If the flame of Christ's love depended upon anything we did; it would not take long for it to turn to smoke and die out. But since it depends on the everlasting and unchangeable flame of Jah or Jehovah, it is impossible for it to go out or change to the smallest degree.

3. Jesus loves you with the highest degree of love that is possible. It is immeasurable. It is a blessing to have the love of a wife or a husband, a parent or a child, a friend or a brother or sister in Christ; but to be loved of God, and to be loved to the most intense degree and for it to never change regardless of all the changes in your life is beyond comprehension. Paul's prayer is my prayer for you (Ephesians 3:17-19).

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