

For Jesus' Sake- a Call to Holy Passion

by David Smithers

David Smithers calls believers to cultivate a passionate love for Jesus that seeks Him for His own sake, not for personal gain.

Topics: "Holy Passion", "Christian Devotion"

Description

David Smithers preaches about the importance of being true lovers of Jesus, not just admirers, emphasizing the need for genuine devotion and passion for Christ. He highlights examples from the Bible of individuals who loved Jesus for His sake alone, such as the woman with the alabaster box, the women who provided for Jesus, and those who made Him a supper. Smithers challenges the listeners to examine their prayer life and motives, urging them to seek a deep, unconditional love for Jesus, not for personal gain but for the sheer delight of being in His presence.

Transcript

Matthew 21 describes perhaps one of the most impressive praise services ever witnessed. As Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He was greeted by a multitude of joyful praisers. With great enthusiasm they waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Yet where were these enthusiastic praisers only one week later as Jesus agonized in the garden or as He hung on the cross? With few exceptions, they all went the way of their forefathers described in Isaiah 29:13, "Therefore the Lord said: 'Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me . . . '". In Christ's darkest hour, He was not quite so attractive to these once ardent praisers. There are many praisers but few loving worshipers. It seems that in many ways the followers of Jesus haven't changed very much since that day He rode into Jerusalem on a humble little donkey. On any given Sunday you can find a multitude who are willing to rejoice in the name of Christ, and rightly so. Yet, where are the ones who live to worship Jesus, for HIS SAKE ALONE! Not because He is a means to obtain our wants and desires, but because, "He is altogether lovely." (Song of Solomon 5:16). Jesus is not a means to an end, He is the beginning and the END. (Col. 1:15-18, Rev. 21:6).

Many of these once fervent followers saw Christ as a means to political advantage and power. I'm afraid many of the followers of Jesus in our own day of sin and uncertainty are pursuing Him for the same reasons. Some of the Church is even being encouraged to seek revival for the sole purpose of establishing national security and prosperity. Imagine, seeking revival more for "OLD GLORY" than for

HIS GLORY! In recent years we have also seen believers being instructed to lift up praises to Christ as a means to bring about the manifestations of healing and spiritual gifts. What father would not be grieved by his children using flattering words only for the purpose of gaining some sweet advantage? I'm sure many of those who are adhering to such teachings are quite sincere. However, we must be discerning and not forgetful of the Apostle's warnings about seeking selfish gain. As the bride of Christ we must be cautious of anything that smacks of manipulation and usury in our relationship with Him. Please do not misunderstand me, I'm quite aware that the Father longs and delights to bless us. He rejoices to meet our every need, but these are the by-product and not the prime product of our devotion to Jesus Christ. Jesus must be the highest object of all our desires and affections. Now let's consider some examples from the scripture of those who loved Jesus for His sake.

The Alabaster Box

We find our first example in Luke 7:36-38. "Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil." This woman did not come to receive a blessing, she came to be a blessing. There is no manipulation here. This is true devotion and passion for Jesus. She came risking rebuke and ridicule just so she could pour out her heart of burning love on Jesus. The flame of her love consumed and destroyed the fear of man. She could only see the feet of her Savior. She had eyes only for HIM. Though she had only come to give, she left with the sweet fragrance of her own sacrifice upon her.

In Luke 7:44-46 we see the difference between the Pharisees mere admiration, and true extravagant love. "Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.'" Many will invite Christ into the home of their hearts and yet deprive Him of the common courtesies of a little oil, water and a kiss of greeting. The true lovers of Jesus are not content with just casual greetings and conversation. They long to live with Jesus in a realm of continual love and holy passion.

Providing For The Lamb

Luke 8:2 & 3 reads, "And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities - Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance." What a rarity these precious women were in the life of Christ. While so many came only to take and receive, very few came back to bless and provide for Jesus from their own substance. Such lovers are still far too rare within the Church.

They Made Him A Supper

John 12:1-3 reminds us that the heart of Jesus is hungry for our love and affection. "Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil and spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil." Here we find another band of true lovers of Jesus. They

are not clinging to Him for what they can receive. They are delighting just to be with Him, just to behold Him and sit with Him. Multitudes come to eat of "the bread of life" but very few return to prepare a meal for Jesus. Many claim to have a true relationship with Christ, but true relationship is both receiving and giving. It's receiving His love and mercy and then in return pouring out our love on Him for His pleasure. This is the true Church, each member serving with their own distinct and individual gifts, all for the pleasure and benefit of Jesus!

Drawing Near to The Heart of Jesus

John 13:21-26 illustrates for us how the ministry of a prophet was designed to operate. The Scripture reads, "When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, 'Most assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus answered, 'It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." Here we see John operating as a true prophet, revealing the secrets of Jesus' heart. Not because he sought a position or ministry office, but simply because he delighted to be close to JESUS. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" desired only to rest his head on Jesus' breast and as a result he heard the secret heart beat of God. Peter recognized that John was much closer to the heart of Jesus than he was. Therefore, he seeks out John for insight and counsel about the will of God. Is this not a picture of the purest form of prophetic ministry? The SECRET of the Lord is with those who love and fear Him.

They Followed the Man, Not the Miracles!

John 19:25 & 26 reveals the stark contrast between unconditional love for Christ and a mere utilitarian religion. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, . . ." Look at Jesus now, He's dying on the cross. He appears to have nothing more to offer anyone. He is not healing the sick with the touch of His hands, they're now pierced and fastened by nails. He is not teaching the profound and eternal truths of the Kingdom. His throat is dry and parched and He can barely even speak. The feet that once miraculously walked on the water are now nailed firmly to the cross. The multitude of admirers and praisers have all forsaken Him. Yet some of the true lovers of Jesus can still be found. They did not truly understand that He would be resurrected, yet they are still there. They were there not for what they could gain, but for what they could give. They were there for Jesus sake. We speak much of God's unconditional LOVE for us, but what kind of love are we to have for Christ? Are we not called to be the bride of Jesus, to cleave to Him alone, forsaking all other lovers, for better or for worse, in sickness and health! Where are the ones who love Jesus with an unconditional LOVE?

The Reward of Holy Passion

What is the reward of such an undying passion for Jesus? The answer is found in John 20:11-23. It is to see the object of all our desires- to see Jesus. The lovers of Jesus were the very first to see Him in resurrection power. Jesus reveals Himself to such ones in a very special way. The generation that strips itself of every impure motivation and loves Christ for His sake, will usher in a mighty visitation from heaven! Such ones will see the risen and glorious JESUS!

I challenge you NOW to examine yourself with the help of the Holy Spirit. Are you a true lover of Jesus or only one of His admirers. A sure way to discover where we are spiritually, is by looking at our prayer life. Do our prayers consistently revolve around NOTHING but ourselves and our needs? Certainly prayer involves petitions for our personal needs, yet true prayer is so much more. True prayer is an intimate time of adoring Jesus. It's being totally preoccupied and fascinated with the Savior. True prayer is both the casting of our cares upon God and then waiting to receive His cares, His burdens and His broken heart. True prayer has in it something that reaches out to touch Jesus, just to be with Him. True prayer delights the heart of Jesus.

If there is one thing that undermines the strength and beauty of the Church in our day, it is our lovelessness. Many, many have grown cold and forsaken their passion for Christ. The Church at large has forgotten and forsaken the heart of Jesus. We have sinfully neglected the fact that Jesus suffers hurt and pain over our disregard for His feelings and desires. Jesus Christ is truly Holy and the exalted King of Kings, yet He still longs to be loved by His bride, not only for what He can give, but for Himself ALONE!

Let us humble ourselves in repentance that we might find grace to respond to the heart cry of the Bridegroom. ". . . Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away! O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely." (Song of Solomon 2:13 & 14).

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