

Loving Jesus

by G.D. Watson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of loving Jesus with all our heart, and the characteristics of personal love for Him, including fear, love, attachment, and longing.

Scripture: Psalm 34:8, Matthew 22:37, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Philippians 3:8, 1 John 4:18, Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Personal Holiness", "Intimacy With God"

Description

G.D. Watson preaches about the importance of having a personal, fervent, and intimate love for Jesus, emphasizing the need for a deep, passionate, and individual connection with the Lord. He highlights how Jesus desires a pure, personal, and affectionate love from His followers, beyond just religious zeal and orthodoxy. Watson explains that personal love for Jesus involves a sacred fear, child-like familiarity, extreme sensitiveness for His honor, yearning for His dispositions, attachment to His possessions, and a longing for His return in glory.

Transcript

We have a revelation of God's personal feelings in the first commandment. We are to love Him with all our heart! The complaint that Jesus had against the Church at Ephesus was their lack of fervent, personal love for Him; they had "works" and "labor" and "patience," and great zeal in searching out heretics, and in bearing persecution and the scorn of their neighbors, and had not fainted under hardships. If such a list of graces were now found in one person, he would be esteemed a great saint ; and yet the infinite Searcher of hearts saw the lack of something for which all these noble virtues could not atone; and that was a warm, deep, incessant, cleaving, tender passion of soul for the person of the Lord Jesus.

Very few Christians reach such an intimacy with our dear Lord as to receive and appreciate His individual feelings. Jesus is an infinite lover, and nothing will satisfy Him but a pure, sacred, passionate, and personal love. He loves to be loved. He loves those most who have the most personal affection for Him. There are so many things that are eminently religious, and brave, and enterprising, and reformatory, which display great zeal and orthodoxy, but which do not satisfy the longings of our Savior's heart. There are so few Christians that are positively affectionate with Jesus. Personal love of Jesus is marked by several characteristics.

We can love Jesus with more different kinds of affection than any other person in the universe. Look at the number of tender relationships that He sustains toward a soul that is perfectly wedded to Him by the Holy Spirit. As our Creator, we adore Him; as our Redeemer, we boundlessly trust Him; as our King, we obey

Him; as our Judge, we fear Him; as our Master, we submit to Him; as our Savior, we praise Him; as a little infant, we feel a fatherly and motherly love toward Him; as a Brother, we feel a brotherly and sisterly love for Him; as our spiritual Bridegroom, our hearts are passionately devoted to Him. Every relation that He sustains to us calls forth a new form of love. There is no kind of affection possible to the human soul which Jesus should not receive. See in how many ways Eve was related to Adam; being built out of his rib, she was his own daughter, and at the same time his own sister, and at the same time his bride; and he being the lord of the human family, she was his servant, and all these relations entered into her affections for him. Jesus is to us, in a similar way, all that Adam was to Eve, with a great deal more besides. Now do we love our precious Lord in all these relationships! Is our love for Him an ever-flowing stream, which is made up from all these several rivulets? There is no one in the universe, to a divinely-illuminated mind, so lovable as our blessed, Divine Jesus.

Personal love for Jesus has in it the extremes of the most sacred fear and the most child-like familiarity. Some people think that those who have much sacred fear can not have much love; and, on the other hand, that those who have a found familiarity of love can not have a reverential fear; but such people are greatly mistaken. Fear and love are the two equal wings to this soaring devotion. Those who have an awe which in the least hinders their love, have a slave's awe, and not that of a child. There is nothing more beautiful in the interior life than that sacred awe, that sweet and sacred dread, which the soul feels in the presence of the Lord. When we gaze at His beautiful and blazing majesty, when our whole soul feels a gentle trembling before Him, there is something in the very holy dread that draws us to a deeper and more tender love. And, on the other hand, there is a spotless familiarity which the soul can take with Jesus - a boldness and liberty of thought and speech - which only serves to make our worship more true, so that, in reality, sacred fear and familiar love act and react on each other.

Personal love of Jesus is indicated by an extreme sensitiveness for His honor. The soul feels an insult at every dishonor that is shown to its Divine Husband. When Jesus is wounded, His name lightly used, His majesty disregarded, His precious blood ignored, this hot personal love will feel a delicate, divine indignation. The heart is as sensitive to the preciousness and honor of Christ as the apple of the eye. The truly wedded soul is very touchy as to the glory of its husband. And, on the other hand, this kind of love is always elated and happy at every advancement of Christ's glory. It loves to see Him extended; it glories in the spread of His glory.

This kind of love has an incessant yearning for all the dispositions manifested in the life of Jesus. This personal love of Jesus has large, bright eyes, and, from the New Testament records, it can see marvelous things in the Christ-life. It has vast and penetrating visions into the depths of His lowliness, the vastness of His charity, the tenderness of His Spirit, the perpetual self-sacrifice of His will, the absolute courage of His obedience, the everlastingness of His kindness. It sees His whole inner life, like a magnificent city, all lifted up with unspeakable attributes, and all bespangled with majesties and virtues and graces and sweetness, that charm and bewilder the soul, and make it leap with intense desire to possess everything which it sees in its lovely Lord. No splendor in creation can compare with the dazzling charms which an ardently loving soul perceives in Jesus. It cries out, with St. Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches!" It is this vision which makes the soul pine and pray, and weep loving tears, and dream over and over of the ineffable transformation of being made just like its heavenly Bridegroom.

This form of love is strongly attached to the possessions of Christ. There is a peculiar attachment which always goes with the possession of a thing. It is the affection of ownership. As soon as anything becomes our property, we have a peculiar attachment which never could exist previous to ownership. This is; why

Jesus said, "Where your possessions are, there will your heart be," He does not say the possessions will go where the heart is, but the heart will go where the possessions are. Hence the soul in perfect, loving union with Jesus will find itself taking hold of all His personal kingdom and all His property, as a young queen finds the affections of her heart stretching out to all the subjects and enterprises of her King's dominion. I should not omit to say that this personal love for Jesus has in it a fond, caressing spirit for Him. It twines its thoughts around Him. It folds Him round and round with the delicate embraces of the Spirit. It often finds itself, like John, leaning on His breast; or, like Mary, sitting at His feet; or, like Magdalene, bathing His feet with tears; and whatever posture the body may be in, the soul is often on its face before Him in perfect, repentant tenderness.

The love of Jesus would not be complete if it did not include a longing for His personal appearing, and to see Him come in the glory of His kingdom. The Holy Spirit loves Jesus with an infinite love, and He alone can flood our being with fervent love for Christ; and the Holy Ghost has told us that we are to "love Christ's appearing." St. Paul speaks of a crown of righteousness for all those who love our Lord's appearing. Any love for Jesus which does not include an intense desire to see and be with Him is below the standard of affection which He requires of us. They please Him most who love Him personally and ardently up to their capacity.

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