

Song of Solomon 1: 4c; “Rightly do they Love You”, Sermon # 6 in the series – “I am my Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 31st, 2009, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

Each of the phrases of these verses is full of spiritual meaning to speak to the heart of the believer. All of these words are meant to speak of the beauty of their developing love for their Beloved - The Lord Jesus Christ. Our relationship with Christ, as believers, is a developing relationship. The development of our relationship with Jesus Christ takes place by new and fresh encounters of His moving and acting in and upon our soul; of our coming to know and experience the power of His love and grace in new ways each day.

Sometimes we see the evidences of that love very clearly, and sometimes we are not looking for and thinking about it as we should. But His love is constant to the one who has trusted in Him for salvation. He is faithful each and every day to express and to convey His love to His beloved Church. Each day with Christ is precious. Each day with Christ is a learning experience; learning to trust Him to help us to put away our sins and to walk in righteousness and in the truth.

Every new day brings fresh challenges to our faith, and new lessons to learn. Each day brings us a step closer to the day when we shall meet Him face to face and fall into His kind arms. But I think that the greatest part of our meeting Him face to face will be that it will instantly answer the question as to whether we really loved Him. He will look at us and He will know the truth of it instantly. “Peter, do you love Me,” Jesus says to Him three times after his denial of Him. Peter was ashamed of his denial and grieved that he had failed His Lord in the time of trial; but even so, he knew that He loved His Lord Jesus. If you will remember His love it will move you to love Him more.

It is always right to love Christ. It is always right to express your thankfulness to Him for all that He has done for you as a sinner, and what He has done for you as one of His saints. And that is what we want to do this afternoon. We want to open up this phrase, “Rightly do they love you”. There are 2 responsibilities related to love which are mentioned here which are important to our Savior King. Love, as you should know, is a responsible grace. And if we fulfill these responsibilities it will help prove to ourselves and to Him that we truly love Him. The first is remembering His love. And the second is uprightness in our love. Let's explore these two responsibilities which love thrives on.

1st of all - Our love to Christ thrives on remembering His love to us.

“We will be glad and rejoice in you.” “We will remember your love more than wine.” The word in the Hebrew here, for love, is in the plural. We will remember your “loves” more than wine. In other words, there are many aspects of Christ's love to your soul, as a believer, and there are many ways that He has proved His love to you, and will prove it to your soul throughout your earthly journey in this life. Therefore we ought to remember His love with great joy, and delight, and thankfulness. We ought to remember Christ's love because God the Father sent

Him to be our Savior, our Shepherd, our Redeemer, and our friend when there was no reason that He could find in us, that would require Him to send Him. It was simply that He loved the world, and would show mercy in saving sinners who were undeserving. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Remember, dear saint, it was the love of the Father to send Christ the Son to be the husband of your soul, or you would have no husband. But God’s love in giving us Christ began in history with the Jews being shown God’s love to them as a people, before it ever came to us Gentiles as it does today. They are a part of the Bride of Christ as they believed in the oath of God’s love expressed to them in His word.

Turn over to Deuteronomy Chapter 7, verse 6. “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” “The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” “Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

Those people who came to really know the Lord among the nation of Israel came to know Him because of His love. The promises of His love were the promises of what He would do in Christ. And it is no different today; whenever a person becomes a Christian, it is always because God has chosen them to be one of His people. And the only way that God could do this great thing and show you His everlasting love was to redeem you from your sins. He had to buy you back from your slavery in sin. He had to purchase you out of sin before He could marry you to His Son.

The Jews had the picture of this given to their minds and their hearts, in their being brought out of physical bondage in Egypt. We have not only the picture; we have the reality of Christ’s finished work on the cross. God the Father had to “deliver Christ up for us all” if we were to be redeemed. But God never chose Israel to be a special people among all the peoples of the earth, because of anything special in them. They were not by nature something special in His sight. In fact it was because they were the least among the nations; so small and so helpless that He felt it could bring glory to Himself to pity them and to save them.

This is also the way that it is with the salvation of any sinner in New Testament times. It is not because you are something special, by nature, in His sight that He gives you the gospel and saves you by creating faith in Christ in your heart. He does it simply because He is a God of love and mercy. This is something that you ought to remember every day of your Christian life. God considers His people as “a special treasure” and so we ought also to remember this; that Christ purchased

us with His own precious blood. He purchase our spiritual freedom. We were in bondage to the world, the flesh, and the Devil. He broke those chains and freed us from our bondage. He did this out of love for our eternal souls. Let us remember that love and magnify it in our minds and hearts, and let it keep us from slipping back into those sins which we once loved more than Him. In each of our hearts, let the world be seen as vain show, let our fleshly lusts wither and die; let the schemes of the Devil to spoil our usefulness to Christ be utterly destroyed as we remember His love!

The Lord Jesus is not only our redeemer as our spiritual husband; He is also our Shepherd as our spiritual husband. He shepherds our hearts; He leads us and guides us on the path of righteousness and into the green pastures of God's word; and we ought to remember this love of His every day. Turn with me over to Psalm 23 for a few moments with me. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters." "He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me." "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over." "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Do you have these verses memorized dearly beloved? You should if you do not; and you should repeat them over and over to yourself in your most happy hours and your most trying hours. Remember His love when everything is going well. And remember His love when everything seems lost and when everything is falling apart. Remember His love when you are in the strength of your youth. Remember His love when it comes your time to get old and die. Remember His faithfulness to you is because of His love.

You have never lacked anything as long as you have trusted in Him. He was upholding you in strength and life even before you ever came to know Him! In love He led you into the good, green, tender pastures of His word so that you learned to take that good spiritual food in. Remember when the word became precious to you and you drew from it your very spiritual life. Remember now; and He will strengthen you now. Remember the quietness and rest that He gave to your soul when you first trusted in Him and which He still gives to you now when you need it most. He gives rest to your soul out of love for you. Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you.

Remember how he first saved your soul and know that He still knows how to restore your soul when you are most discouraged. Remember that He is faithful to restore your soul when you are backslidden; let His rod and His staff comfort you. He will bring back to the place where you ought to be. He will never cast you out when you come to Him looking for grace and the strength to do His will. Love Him for this, I say. Remember His love is perfect when yours is not. "He is faithful even when you are faithless." Repent of all of your sins. Repent of every

sin. Repent every day of the many faults, and weaknesses and sins that you find in yourself, but remember; the grace of repentance came from Him; and it came to you because He loved you. It comes to you now because He loved you and gave Himself for you on the cross.

You should remember His love because it is He who delivers you from all your fears. Even when death is close by and you are walking in its shadow, you will fear no evil, for Christ is with you. Even when you are in the presence of your enemies He is preparing a table of good things that you can feed on spiritually. He anoints you with the refreshing oil of the presence of His Holy Spirit. Your soul is running over with His blessings even in that worst and most dreaded of situations. It is good to remember His love, because in His love He has ordained that goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life.

And you remember that His word tells you that you will dwell in His house forever. You will leave your earthly house which you have dwelt in; you will leave the house of worship someday; the place where you met with God and His people for so many years, but you will never leave His presence, or need a place for your soul to worship Him, forever! For God the Father is an eternal dwelling place for His people, and our King Jesus has an eternal palace and eternal dwelling places for us to abide in forever. All these things your soul should remember. "The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy." (Psalm 145: 17)

You should remember His love in that He is the One who hears all of your prayers, who blesses you with all spiritual blessings, and is your Faithful and Kind friend, who sticks closer to you than any brother; physical or spiritual. This you should remember and be thankful, and be praising Him every day. "I will extol You, My God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever." "Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever."

"Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." "One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts." "I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works." "Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness." "They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness." Oh, this is what it means to remember Christ's love.

The 2nd Responsibility which love thrives on is our being upright in our love to Christ.

"Rightly do they love you." These words can be translated in two different ways; both of which are acceptable. The first is what I just said to you; "Rightly do they love you." The other way of translating it is as the King James has it: "The upright love Thee". According to the Hebrew text, it is saying, "Uprightnesses love Thee". The old Rabbi Solomon Jarchi translates it, "With an upright love they love Thee". This is speaking of a sincere love of God and Christ. It is speaking of the believer's being desirous to have the kind of love that flows from a sincere faith. "The end, or purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good

conscience, and from a sincere faith.” (An un-hypocritical faith) Thomas Robinson says in his commentary, “A holy Christ is capable of being loved only by holy persons, or such at least as, conscious of their sins, desire to be holy.” He is saying that it is right to love Christ because Christ is holy, but you will not love Christ unless you have been converted to Him. When you come to Him confessing you sins and asking for His grace and help to know the forgiveness of them, and to have a new life of living to God and His word, His ways and His commandments,

He gives this to you freely. He gives you a new heart. But along with that He expects that you will exercise your faith and that you will love righteousness and hate lawlessness, because you love Him. Robinson goes on to say, “Like naturally loves and draws to like.” “Hence Christ is only loved by converted and renewed persons.” “Love to God’s Christ is a holy and spiritual thing.” ...”Robbery is committed when Christ is not loved; idolatry when others are loved in His place.”

Then he quotes 1 Corinthians 16: 22 – “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.” (That is; accursed when the Lord comes back) In other words, our love for Christ must be a love which is pure at its root. We cannot possibly have a hypocritical love for Him and end up going to heaven. David was a man after God’s own heart, and yet he sinned grievously in the matter of his sin with Bathsheba. God was displeased with him, but he did not cast him off as he did king Saul.

Why? It was because he did not try to justify his sin in the least. He mourned and grieved over it, and prayed in Psalm 51: 10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” You see this is what it means to be upright in heart, and to have an upright love for Christ. It will lead you to have sincere and penitent dealings with the One who loves you, and who died for you.

You never read of Saul having dealings like this with God, or of his ever coming to a real repentance of his sins. That is because God removed his lovingkindness from him; his mercy from him, and there was no saving work of grace that He performed upon His soul. The blame is not to be laid at God’s doorstep. It is to be laid at the doorstep of Saul’s treacherous heart. If we confess our sins as simply our having made some sort of a mistake which has hurt ourselves in the eyes of other people; as Saul did; we really haven’t understood Biblical confession.

We must learn to confess our sins as David did in Psalm 51. “Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.” He also says there in verse 4, “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.” That is true repentance; that is true contrition; that is what repentance is all about. Then, when sin is confessed in this way; and the dishonor to God is acknowledged, then a Christian can pray sincerely, “Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

An upright love for God has a broken and contrite spirit behind it; not a self-justifying spirit behind it. A believer may struggle long and hard against many sins in his life, and be entirely sincere in it, for he knows and he believes that only God can save him from himself; from his pride, from his self-sufficiency, from his self-confidence. But learning to overcome these things will breed a righteous confidence in God that God will save him, God will keep him, God will empower him to do what is right. He will learn to pray the words of Psalm 125, verse 4, "Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts."

There is in the heart of one who prays like this; a basic sincerity that Christ's grace has created. That person loves the Lord who delivers them from all their transgressions and iniquities. He prays the prayer of Psalm 19: 12 – "Who can understand his errors?" "Cleanse me from secret faults." "Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." "Then I shall be blameless." (or upright) These are the prayers of the upright in heart. It is the upright in heart who truly love Christ. Ask yourself, as I close this sermon, if this is a description of you?

Have you come to realize as a believer that Christ has a right to your love? He died to purchase you back from sin; but not to rest there; He died so that He might know your love. Will you not give it to Him? Give Him your heart; give Him your obedience; give Him the chief place in your thoughts and affections. And you will find His presence and His word and His Spirit are enough to satisfy all the desires of your heart.