

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

September 26, 2021

Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!

Prelude

Worship Theme

Christ is our Healer

Hosea 6:1-3: "Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth."

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross Ex. 15:1-2

+We Adore Him

Insert, "Look, Ye Saints"

We Confess Our Sin

O Majestic Lord, Your law is perfect, but we are imperfect: Your statutes are trustworthy, but we are fallible. Your precepts are right, though we are wrong: Your commands are radiant, though we are dull.

Father, forgive us for ignoring Your commands, and transgressing Your Law! Forgive us for delayed and partial obedience! By Your grace and the obedience of Jesus, forgive our sins. By Your grace and the power of Your Spirit, cause us to love Your law, and to esteem it to be more precious than gold, and sweeter than honey. Make us zealous for good deeds. Through Jesus we pray, Amen.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Insert, "Grace of God"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication Ex. 15:11, 13

We Give Him Our Offering and Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Insert, "The Lord in Your Distress Attend"

Psalm 20

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship

Ex. 15:17

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Insert, "Jesus! What A Friend For Sinners!"

God Blesses us in the Benediction

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

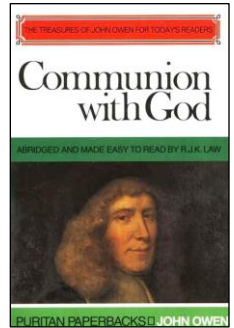
The Glory of God's Grace: The Love of God and our Growth in Grace

Song of Songs 2:1-6

Study Notes for September 26, 2021

I. Introduction: John Owens' "Communion with God"

II. The Glory of God's Grace: The Love of God and our Growth in Grace, Song of Songs 2:1-6.



A. An Important Background, Select.

1. Our Proclivity on account of Creation, Rom. 10:2-3; 17b-20; Gal. 2:17-18.

Romans 10:2-3

Romans 2:17b-20

Galatians 2:17-18

***Point:** Though we are in Christ, we must recognize that Our Proclivity when it comes to God is to Relate to Him on the Basis of our Performance!

2. Our Presupposition on account of the Fall, Gen. 3:1-6; Select.

Genesis 3:1-6

It is because of this, the Bible says it over and over again... that (1) God is love and (2) we as God's people must grow in our understanding of this (cf. 1 Jn. 4:8b; Ps. 63:3a; 94:18; Jn. 3:16a; the Psalter)...

The understanding that God loves us was something Paul prayed for (cf. 2 Thes. 3:5; Eph. 6:23)...

When God's people lost this sense of God's love, the Lord rebuked them (cf. Rev. 2:4)...

***Point:** There are two facets to our being which wage war against a healthy walk with God...

1. We long to relate to God on the basis of our Performance. And feeding into this- making it the perfect storm for us to flounder as Christians.
2. We hold as a fundamental presupposition that God does not love us and could not love us!

B. The Path to Spiritual Growth, 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Eph. 3:14-16a, 19; Prov. 26:3; Rom. 12:1.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

***Point:** Coming to understand the Love of God is not *A* key to growth in grace, but *THE* key! Because in our fallen state we naturally question God's love and because our performance will always fall short, our tendency will be to accept rather quickly the greatness of God all the while questioning His love for us! And when we do this we eviscerate God's program for our growth.

John Owen wrote of God, "Flesh and blood is apt to have very hard thoughts of Him, to think He is always angry, yea, implacable; that it is not for poor creatures to draw nigh to Him... 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' say the sinners in Zion (Isa. 33:14)... Satan claps his hands when he can take up the soul with such thoughts of God: he [Satan] has enough, all that he desires. This has been his design and way from the beginning. The first blood that murderer shed was by this means. He leads our first parents into hard thoughts of God: 'Hath God said so? Hath he threatened you with death? He knows well enough it will be better with you'; with this engine did he batter and overthrow all mankind in one; and being mindful of his ancient conquest, he readily uses the same weapons wherewith then he so successfully contended." (*Communion with God*, 1657)

John Owen wrote, "Eye the Father as love; look not on him as an always lowering [or displeased] father, but as one most kind and tender. Let us look on him by faith, as one that has had thoughts of kindness towards us from everlasting... Men cannot abide with God in spiritual meditations. He loses souls' company by their want of this insight into his love. They fix their thoughts only on his terrible majesty, severity, and greatness; and so their spirits are not endeared... Let, then, this be the saints' first notion of the Father- as one full of eternal, free love towards them: let their hearts and thoughts be filled with breaking through all discouragements that lie in the way." (*Communion with God*, 1657)

Ephesians 3:14-16a, 19

Psalms 26:3

Romans 12:1a

***Point:** From this we conclude that growth in grace occurs not as we do more religious things, but as we gaze upon God in Christ via the means of grace, and there behold His love. The fruit of this is a life that responds in self-sacrifice and service!

***Where We Live:** So what ought we to do in order to grow in our walks with Christ?

1. Let us Prayer as Paul did in Eph. 3:17-19a...
2. Let us labor to put to death any and all performance proclivities in our walk with God (cf. Gal. 2:21b)...
3. Let us avail ourselves of the means of grace not as a performance, but in order to feed our faith and so come to a fuller understanding of God...

C. A Key Pursuit of the Christian Life: Celebrating Divine Love, Select.

1. It Begins with an Important Realization, SS. 2:1-2.

As it Pertains to Ourselves, SS. 2:1.

Rose of Sharon

Lily of the Valley

As it Pertains to How God Views Us, SS. 2:2.

Lily among the Thorns

***Point:** The Celebration of God's Love begins as we consider what we are in our sin and then consider that in spite of our wretchedness, God set His love upon us!

2. The Security that Comes from this Shocking Revelation, SS. 2:4b, 6.

The Banner of the Lord, v. 4b.

The Banner in Action, v. 6.

***Point:** What is our security as Christians? In what is it grounded?

3. The Delight that Comes as a Result of God's Love, SS. 2:3, 4a, 5.

Song of Solomon 2:3

Song of Solomon 2:4a

Song of Solomon 2:5

John Owen wrote, "So much as we see of the love of God, so much shall we delight in him, and no more. Every other discovery of God, without this, will but make the soul fly from him; but if the heart be once much taken up with the eminency of the Father's love, it cannot choose but be overpowered, conquered, and endeared to him." (*Communion with God*, 1657)

Recall the words of C. S. Lewis, "We have to be continually reminded of what we believe. Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in the mind. It must be fed. And as a matter of fact, if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?" (*Mere Christianity*, Book 3, Chapter 11)

John Owen wrote, "Until the love of the Father be received, we have no communion with him in that [love]. How, then, is this love of the Father to be received, so as to hold fellowship with him? I answer, 'By faith.' The receiving of it is the believing of it... Though there be no light for us but in the beams, yet we may by beams see the sun, which is the fountain of it. Though all our refreshment actually lie in the streams, yet by them we are led up to the fountain. Jesus Christ, in respect of the love of the Father, is but the beam, the stream; in which though actually all our light, our refreshment lies, yet by him we are led to the fountain, the sun of eternal love itself." (*Communion with God*, 1657)