

Session 1 God's Beloved: Transformed by Seeing Who You Are to God

I. THE LORD SEES HIS PEOPLE AS "HIS BELOVED"

- A. The end-time church must be equipped with an understanding of God's love and beauty and how He sees and feels about His people. This will equip the body of Christ to walk in victory in the midst of the most emotionally wounded and sexually broken generation in human history.

¹⁷***"And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)***

¹⁵***Oh, how beautiful you are, My beloved! Oh, how beautiful you are! (Song 1:15, NET)***

⁷***To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints... (Rom. 1:7)***

²⁵***"I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved." (Rom. 9:25)***

¹⁰***I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me. (Song 7:10)***

- B. Being beloved by God includes the Lord relating to His people with affectionate delight as He enjoys their great value and beauty in His eyes. The Bride sees the King as her "beloved" (1:14; 2:3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17; 4:16; 5:2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16; 6:1, 2, 3; 7:9, 10, 11, 13; 8:5, 14).

- C. The Lord spoke to me in July 1988 while I was reading Song 8:6 and praying, "Let Jesus seal my heart with the seal of His love." The Lord said *He would release grace to the Body of Christ worldwide to walk in Song 8:6-7*; this speaks of walking out the first commandment in our life.

⁶***Set Me [Jesus] as a seal upon your heart...for love is as strong as death. (Song 8:6)***

II. INTERPRETING THE SONG OF SOLOMON

- A. ***Natural interpretation:*** This view depicts a love story between King Solomon and his bride, a Shulamite maiden. It sets forth principles that honor the beauty of love within marriage. We take the Song at face value where Solomon mentions his courtship and the various stages of his marriage.

- B. ***Spiritual interpretation:*** This view employs a symbolic interpretation of the Song to emphasize the Lord's relationship with His people as the Bridegroom King. The majority of commentaries throughout church history have interpreted the Song as an allegorical portrayal of Jesus and the Church. We refuse all sensual overtones in interpreting the Song of Solomon allegorically.

- C. Each book of the Bible was given by the inspiration of the Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16). It is improbable that the Spirit would inspire a book in the Bible that would not directly and ultimately magnify Jesus.

¹⁴***"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." (Jn. 16:14)***

- D. Jesus spoke of Himself to the disciples on the Emmaus road from all the Scriptures.

²⁷***He expounded...in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Lk. 24:27)***

III. FIVE DISTINCTIVES IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON

- A. The Song of Solomon emphasizes God's emotions. It gives us insight into *why* Jesus created and redeemed us. Many scriptures tell us *what* Jesus did in creation and redemption going to the cross.
- B. **God's emotions:** His emotions include love, affection, delight, and enjoyment in relating to His people. Seeing how God sees and feels about His people empowers us to love Him (1 Jn. 4:19).
- C. **God's beauty:** especially seen as our Bridegroom King (Ps. 27:4; 45:2; Isa. 4:2; 28:5; 33:17). Encountering God's majestic beauty is foundational to enjoying Him and experiencing the spiritual pleasure that comes by being fascinated with Him.
¹⁷***"Your eyes will see the King in His beauty."* (Isa. 33:17)**
- D. **Our beauty in God's eyes:** The beauty that Jesus possesses is the very beauty that He imparts to His people in redemption.
¹***"The LORD has anointed Me...³ to give them beauty for ashes."* (Isa. 61:1-3)**
¹⁷***And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us.* (Ps. 90:17)**
- E. **First commandment:** God created His people to love Him wholeheartedly—with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mk. 12:30). One purpose in studying the Song is to receive a greater understanding and impartation of Jesus' love for His Bride (Jn. 15:9).
- F. **Partnership:** The Song sets forth key principles that equip us to grow in partnership with Jesus.
²⁴***"Father, I desire that they...may be with Me where I am."* (Jn. 17:24)**
⁴***"They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years...⁶ they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."* (Rev. 20:4-6)**
- G. Love longs for partnership that works with another—Jesus with His people, and we with Him. Jesus identified love as God's *first* priority and the way to *greatness* (Mt. 22:38). Paul wrote of it as the more *excellent way* and as that which *compels* us to give our all (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:13; 2 Cor. 5:14).
- H. When we see and feel about ourselves and others what God sees and feels about us, we are empowered to love. *Width:* His love includes all nations. *Length:* it reaches far (covering all sin) and lasts forever. *Depth:* it was costly for Jesus to descend so low. *Height:* it exalts us.
¹⁷***...that you...¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height...¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.* (Eph. 3:17-19)**
- I. The Spirit enables us to comprehend that God sees our value, destiny, and beauty and feels delight over us and others. We are empowered to love deeper and more consistently as we see ourselves and others as God does, rather than seeing ourselves through the lens of our sin and brokenness and viewing others through the lens of their sin and brokenness.

IV. JESUS LIVED AS GOD'S BELOVED

- A. Just before Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, the Father called Jesus "His beloved Son."
*¹⁷And suddenly a voice...saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
(Mt. 3:17)*
- B. Just before Jesus went to the cross, the Father called Jesus "His beloved Son."
*⁵...and suddenly a voice...saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
(Mt. 17:5)*
- C. The Church will face an unprecedented measure of temptation and persecution in the end times. Seeing themselves as God's beloved will strengthen them to walk in victory (Rev. 12:11; 15:2).

V. BEING GOD'S BELOVED

- A. Christ's relationship to the Father is the foundation of *our* relationship to the Father. As Jesus is the Father's beloved, so the Church is beloved of God. We will enjoy more intimacy in our relationship with God as we see more and more of the reality of our *belovedness* in His eyes.
⁹"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you." (Jn. 15:9)
²³"...that the world may know that You...have loved them as You have loved Me." (Jn. 17:23)
- B. Paul often referred to the saints as beloved of God.
⁷To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints... (Rom. 1:7)
- C. Paul magnified the truth of God's love, which was fully embodied in the person of His Son.
*⁴He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...⁶His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.
(Eph. 1:4-6)*
1. **Accepted us in the Beloved:** God accepted us in Jesus as "the Beloved," giving us insight into the purpose and quality of our relationship with Him forever. God gives Himself to us in the way He gave Himself to Jesus. Paul viewed eternity past and future as being "in the Beloved."
 2. **Before the foundation of the world:** God created mankind, in His eternal purposes, as an expression of His love. The meaning of our very existence is to experience and express love. Some translations say, "He chose us *in love* before the foundation of the world to be holy."
- D. Paul understood that we must look to the Father to find our primary identity, rather than looking to other people to affirm "who we are." A believer who lives with confidence in God's love and of being "beloved" is able to be live more committed than one living in condemnation.
- E. Confidence in being God's beloved is the place where condemnation, rejection, and despair are overcome and where love for God is awakened. Teaching believers to see that they are His beloved is the most effective way to equip them to seek to live in wholehearted obedience.

- F. The primary battleground in the spirit is Satan's accusations against our identity. The enemy accuses us, telling us that we are not God's beloved, but rather that we are rejected by God. He tells us that we have gone too far, or that it is too late to come back.
- G. John wrote of himself as beloved, as "the one Jesus loved" (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20)
²⁶*Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple [John]whom He loved standing by. (Jn. 19:26)*
²*She ran to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said... (Jn. 20:2)*
⁷*Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved [John]said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" (Jn. 21:7)*
²⁰*Then Peter...saw the disciple [John] whom Jesus loved. (Jn. 21:20)*
²³*Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. (Jn. 13:23)*
- H. David saw himself as God's beloved. This was foundational to his trusting and loving God. After 16 months of compromise at Ziklag, he proclaimed that God delighted in him (Ps. 18:19).
⁵*...that Your beloved may be delivered, save with Your right hand, and hear me. (Ps. 60:5)*
¹⁹*He delivered me because He delighted in me...³⁵Your gentleness has made me great. (Ps. 18:19, 35)*
- I. Jeremiah spoke of Israel as "God's beloved" when they were under divine discipline by Babylon.
¹⁵*"What has My beloved to do in My house, having done lewd deeds with many?" (Jer. 11:15)*
⁷*"I have forsaken My house...I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies." (Jer. 12:7)*
- J. Jeremiah was encouraged by seeing himself as "God's beloved" when in a season of persecution.
³*The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." (Jer. 31:3)*
- K. Like Jeremiah, Peter spoke of being God's beloved to strengthen believers in persecution.
¹²*Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. (1 Pet. 4:12)*
- L. Paul spoke of being God's beloved to strengthen those being tempted to act in revenge.
¹⁹*Beloved, do not avenge yourselves...for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." (Rom. 12:19)*
- M. Peter spoke of being God's beloved to strengthen those who were tempted to yield to lust.
¹¹*Beloved, I beg you...abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (1 Pet. 2:11)*
- N. The psalmist spoke of being God's beloved to strengthen those who overworked because of anxiety.
²*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late...for so He gives His beloved sleep. (Ps. 127:2)*