

“A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due Me? If I am a master, where is the respect due Me?” says the LORD Almighty... When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the LORD Almighty... For I am a great king,” says the LORD Almighty, “and My name is to be feared among the nations.”
(Malachi 1: 6, 8, 14)

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 14:12)

Anno Domini 2020: Familiarity

God’s love for us is immeasurable, incalculable, well beyond any poor, pitiful measurement scales we His creation might try to apply. And yet, I fear we are forgetting that He is still God, the Creator, the One who is the source of our life and our salvation.

In these times of the Last Days, as wickedness seems to multiply exponentially almost on a daily basis, we seek comfort for our troubled souls and reassurance that things will be put right again. Only God can provide this for us and, naturally, we as believers turn to Him. But in doing so, I believe we find ourselves running up against another casualty of the Last Days; the limits we place on how much we are willing to show love.

In the times of both the Old and New Testaments, families were far more closely-knit than they are today. Even when the passions of youth burned off, the bonds set were strong enough to keep the members as one, to the point where multiple generations lived under the same roof or in the same tent complex. When one member passed away, official mourning would last for at least a month as the surviving members experienced the pain of the break that had occurred. Love flowed far more easily under such circumstances; people might take offense at the actions of a member in such a situation, but anything that would lead to the breakup of the unit had to be something *really* horrible.

By the latter part of the 20th Century, as people pulled away from God, sin had more easily entered the household and family units either broke apart far more easily (or were never formed in the first place), family members – especially children – were among the greatest casualties of such destruction. And beyond the normal emotional cost of adultery and divorce came a form of withdrawal that I do not believe has been adequately studied. As in the old saying, *once burned, twice shy*, children whose families are broken up by divorce can become reserved, even hostile to another opportunity to reach out for familial love. And in the case of a missing father – the one member of the family who is supposed to model the love of God to its members – the impact of the loss can be devastating.

People who have experienced this can resort to expressing a superficial, shallow form of love in their relationships, not wanting to go deeper out of fear of being hurt again. In terms of our relationship with God, I believe this has led to an overly-familiar approach to the Almighty, what some have characterized as *Papa God*. This manifests itself in a number of ways, which I will not go into here because I know what will happen; some people reading this will get bogged down in details and arguing

minutiae and miss the core point. And that point is one of *intent*, giving that superficial, shallow form of love to God while all the while keeping Him at arm's length and not wanting to go deeper into everything He is. Owing Him everything – our very existence, our Salvation – yet giving Him less than our all. Will what we can give Him be perfect? Certainly not; we will not attain perfection until we are with Him in the Kingdom. But when we consciously hold back from giving Him all that we are and letting Him do what He pleases with us, then we are being shallow in our love for Him. And all of us are guilty of this, especially at we begin our walk with Him; as we proceed, however, our roots (if you will) are supposed to grow deep into Him and we become more open with the One who knows everything about us already and still loves us beyond our imagination.

As this year progresses, I hope to write more on this topic; not to return to those less-than-thrilling days of yesteryear when everyone was uptight (and superficial), but to point us to greater freedom in God as we give of ourselves. This year just beginning is shaping up to be both terrible and great because the Lord is going to pour out great blessings and power upon His people to counteract the last-ditch efforts of satan to thwart or hinder God's Kingdom, in which all the stops (as it were) are going to be pulled. Believers will need this assistance, not merely to overcome the lies of the kingdom of darkness, but to live triumphantly in the anointing of the Lord. But we must remember that God is *holy*. We must learn to empty ourselves of that which is not holy in order to let Him pour more of Himself into us. And one of the first steps in that process, as we shall see in the next message, is to re-learn the meaning of covenant.

For the Glory of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ
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