

Jesus Loves Me!

Today, while I was relaxing by myself, this phrase, “Jesus loves me,” came into my head. Normally, I can think about and even talk about this truth without experiencing a deep emotional reaction. But today, I was completely overtaken with an emotional response. Before long, tears were streaming down my face. I found my way to the living room couch where I laid face down with tears flowing. I thanked God for His great mercies and for His love. I asked Him to make His grace abound in me so that I would be able to show my love for Him in greater measure through obedience and a life consecrated unto Him. After several minutes, the tears stopped and my energy was drained. I don’t think I fully understand all the reasons for this experience but while it is still fresh, I decided to write down some things hoping that some good may come of it.

During my experience, some questions floated through my mind. One such question was, “Is this experience a direct result of the love of God being shed abroad in my heart (Romans 5:5) or am I simply experiencing an emotionally unstable moment?” I do believe that our emotions can trick us. Jeremiah said, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?*” (Jeremiah 17:9). So I wondered if I am merely an emotional basket case.

While experiencing these deep emotions, several scriptures came to mind that seem to have some relevance. Foremost is Paul’s prayer recorded in Ephesians:

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:14-19).

When I think about this passage, I can’t help but conclude that God’s love for us is so great that if we fully comprehended it, we would be overcome with emotions too deep to handle. During my experience, another passage came to my mind that conveys what the effects of this would be like:

*And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and **no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.** Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words” (Daniel 10:7-12).*

From the words in the three verses leading up to this passage, we know that Daniel probably experienced a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ. One thing is for sure. I did not experience this type of vision. But the effect this vision had on Daniel was not completely unlike the effects I experienced as I sensed Jesus’ love for me today. Could it be that in this age, having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts is the closest thing possible to experiencing what it is like to be in His presence? When I read about the saints in heaven casting their crowns at Jesus’ feet and falling on their faces, I wonder if they keep falling on their faces simply because they need to rest from the overwhelming experience from being in His presence. Could it be that His love is so intense that no man can or will ever be able to fully take it in without collapsing face first before Him? Could it be that in heaven, we will need to recuperate periodically from being overcome by Jesus’ love? And because His love is beyond fully finding out, could it be that there will be no end to its power to reduce us to emotional jelly?

This is not the first time that I have experienced being overcome with emotions as a result of sensing God's love for me. It has been a while since I was impacted like this. I don't expect that I will be overcome in this fashion from moment to moment from now on. Perhaps this is by God's design that during life on earth, we are not always overcome with emotions as a result of pondering God's love for us. After all, in this condition, I don't think I would be able to do any work. I don't think I could even proclaim the gospel effectively being overcome like this.

Should I seek to be continuously overcome by emotions as a result of sensing God's love for me? If tears of joy are not always streaming down my face, should I conclude that my heart is cold and not able to comprehend God's love properly? Does anyone else think thoughts like this? (Sometimes I wonder if I am just a bit off the beaten path.) I guess that right now, I believe that the reason why I am not overcome (sensing God's love) more frequently is because my heart is probably too cold and my faith too weak to fully comprehend His love.

Perhaps there is something inside me that tries to protect me emotionally. I am quite sure that today, while going through this, I sensed my heart trying to protect itself from letting God's love fully in for fear of becoming completely overwhelmed. Doesn't that seem strange? I surmise that the best thing to do is ask God to watch over my heart and guide me to deal with my emotions in the way that He desires and just trust Him for the outcome.

I can understand why some might conclude that I don't know what in the world I am talking about. That is okay. I probably don't. But let me say some things in conclusion that I know are true.

God's love for us is personal and in fact, romantic. He purposely chose to use romantic imagery to convey His love for us in His Word.

“As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isaiah 62:5b).

*“Come, I will show you the bride, **the Lamb's wife**” (Revelation 21:9b).*

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25).

My Husband, Jesus, betrothed me to Himself before the foundation of the world. It was always His desire to come and rescue me, His bride, in spite of my adulterous heart and ways. His love for me motivated Him to gladly lay down His life to die so that I might live and be made holy and pure. This is more than personal. It is romantic. (I mean romantic in the way that the Bible portrays it, not the way the world has cheapened it.)

Seeing that God has revealed His love for us in this way, it is no wonder that the Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). Can you hear Him whispering to you the following words?: “I love you.” He is actually yelling this if we open our ears. *“God demonstrated (is yelling) His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).* (The words “is yelling” are mine.)

On a parting note, I find it interesting that the angels, including Gabriel, believe that we are “greatly beloved” by God. Here is what Gabriel said to Daniel:

“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved” (Daniel 9:23). The angels know this. It seems to me that we are not as convinced of it to the same degree that the angels believe it. Imagine Gabriel suddenly appeared to you and said, _____ (fill in your name), “You are greatly beloved.” Do you have a hard time imagining that such words are believed by Gabriel concerning you? May God enable us to know the extent of His love toward us so that we might lay down our lives for the brethren (See I John 3:16).

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