

## **BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE** (Eph 2:4)

**And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works (Heb 10:24)**

INTRO:

- My desire to stir you up to learn to love God even as I desire to stir up my own heart
- In many ways I feel inadequate,
- In my own journey I am seeking ....to truly appreciate the worth of our Lord and of His overwhelming love towards us
- Contrast the coldness of my own heart and the weakness of my passion for my Lord.
- In MATEO terms .... I long for the freedom to make much of my Lord
- Challenge – to stir up ourselves and stir up those around us to love God first and foremost and to love our neighbor as ourselves.
- The Bible gives us many ways to stir ourselves up – and one way is contrasts
- May this message help you to wonder in awe at the love of our Saviour Jesus

### **1. See God – (in His love towards us)**

**Eph1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight.**

- the language that God uses here to speak to believers is very strong:
- do we fail to be moved because we simply take for granted that we exist
- do we fail to remember and rejoice that God truly has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.
- As I reflect on my lack of joy I wonder whether or not it is because I have too worldly a sense of blessing

- a comfortable life, prosperity, healthy, no conflicts, minimal stress except where we choose stress
- We find it hard to count ourselves as those blessed with every spiritual blessing – those upon whom God has lavishly poured out the riches of His grace – particularly when we are suffering
- Yet this is God’s truth. And we will understand this best, when we meditate upon the example of our Lord and precious Saviour Jesus Christ.

See the contrast:

## 2. See ourselves (in our sinful state)

Eph 2:1,3,5 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, .....the sons of disobedience. ..... and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. .... even when we were dead in our transgressions,

2.12 ....*remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, .....having no hope and without God in the world.

- Ponder our state
- and our greatest sin was (and may often still be) unbelief.

In our sin we were no better than those who condemned our Lord Jesus.

From Spurgeon’s sermon No. 2473, entitled “**An Awful Contrast**” “Then did they spit in his face.”—Matthew 26:67.

(read) “GUIDED BY OUR TEXT in Matthew's Gospel, let us first go in thought to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, and there let us, in deepest sorrow, realize the meaning of these terrible words: "Then did they spit in his face.""

Think about it – it was the religious leaders, though who ought to have known best yet "they spit in his face." .....

There are two or three thoughts that come to my mind when I think that these wicked men did actually spit in Christ's face,—in that face which is the light of heaven, the joy of angels, the bliss of saints, and the very brightness of the Father's glory. This spitting shows us, first, *how far sin will go*. If we want proof of the depravity of the heart of man, I will not point you to the stews of Sodom and Gomorrah, nor will I take you to the places where blood is shed in streams by wretches like to Herod and men of that sort. No, the clearest proof that man is utterly fallen, and that the natural heart is enmity against God, is seen in the fact that they did spit in Christ's face, did falsely accuse him, and condemn him, and lead him out as a malefactor, and hang him up as a felon that he might die upon the cross.”

- In our sin before we came to Christ – we “spat upon our Saviour’s face”
- As believers, when we sin - we still spit upon His face
- O what love, O what mercy – that Jesus covers us with His blood.

- we should be overwhelmed at His mercy and delight in His glory.

### 3. See Jesus (in His glory)

Jn 1:1 - 3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

Ps 33: 6 – 9 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap: He puts the deep into storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. 9 For He spoke, and it came to be, He commanded, and it stood firm.

Eph 1.20-22 JESUS .... seated (at the Father's) right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

- Jesus Christ – King of kings and Lord of lords
- He who reigns eternally, all powerful, all knowing, all present, all wisdom and glory and power, all righteousness and purity.
- Utterly and completely sovereign. The One is Was, Is and Is to come.  
Remember who it is who purchased us, who loved us, whom it is we serve, whom it is that we owe our everything. Jesus !

And remember what our exalted King did for us

### 4. See Jesus – (in His humility)

Phil 2:5 – 8 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

(Spurgeon) "My meditation also turns towards the Well-beloved into whose face they spat; and my thought concerning him is this, *how deep was the humiliation he had to endure!*"

(to paraphrase Spurgeon)

- Jesus was no sinner, and he could be none; he was perfect man and perfect God, yet he stood in the place of sinners,
- it became incumbent upon the justice of God to treat Jesus as if He were actually a sinner.
- He was not spared this last and most brutal of insults: "Then did they spit in his face." O my Lord, to what terrible degradation art thou brought! Into what depths art thou dragged through my sin, and the sin of all the multitudes whose iniquities were made to meet upon thee!

- No one can ever know all the shame the Lord of glory suffered when they did spit in his face.

And:

I think of *the tender omnipotence of his love*. How could he bear this spitting when, with one glance of his eye, had he been but angry, the flame might have slain them, and withered them all up? Yet he stood still even when they did spit in his face;

.....How could he bear it? Friends, he could not have borne it if he had not been omnipotent. That very omnipotence, which would have enabled him to destroy them, was omnipotence of love as well as omnipotence of force. It was this that made him—if I may so say,—"restrain himself," for there is no omnipotence like that which doth restrain omnipotence.

(paraphrase Spurgeon)

- but can you think of this marvellous condescension without feeling your hearts all on fire with love to him?
- Don't you long to do some special act of service and worship to Jesus, by which you might repay Jesus if you could, for this shame that He bore for you and I?

5. **See Jesus (AGAIN - in His love)**

Eph 2.4-6 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, .....made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

Eph 3.16-21 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, .....may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

- Because of His great love
- According to the riches of His glory – He will enable us to know His love
- How overwhelming His love for us – to do far more abundantly than we can think or ask
- And all this He does for us – for His glory !!

## 6. (Our joyful) response (to our Saviour's love)

### a) (walk worthy of Christ)

Eph 4.1-3 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 1:12 .....we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

### b) (Be imitator's of Christ)

Eph 5.1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

### c) (Be strong in our Lord)

Eph 6.10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

Close with 2 more quotes from Spurgeon's sermon – (paragraphs reversed)

"Yet once more, if ever anybody should despise us for Christ's sake, let us not count it hard, but let us be willing to bear scorn and contempt for him. Let us say to ourselves, "'Then did they spit in his face.' What, then, if they also spit in mine? If they do, I will 'hail reproach, and welcome shame,' since it comes upon me for his dear sake." See, that wretch is about to spit in Christ's face!

Put your cheek forward, that you may catch that spittle upon your face, that it fall not upon him again, for as he was put to such terrible shame, every one who has been redeemed with his precious blood ought to count it an honor to be a partaker of the shame, if by any means we may screen him from being further despised and rejected of men.

And when you have done that, then let your whole life be spent in trying to magnify and glorify him whom you and others have defamed and dishonored. Oh, I think that, if I had ever denied Christ's Deity, I should want to stand in this pulpit night and day to revoke what I had said, and to declare him to be the Son of God with power! I think that, if I had ever set up anything in opposition to him,

I should want day and night to be setting him up above everything else, as indeed, I long to do. Come, Christian brethren and sisters, let us do something unusual in Christ's honor; let us find out something or invent something fresh, either in the company of others or all by ourselves, by which we may further glorify his blessed name

