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LIFE-STUDY OF THE PSALMS MESSAGE 20 and 21

THE PSALMISTS' INTENSIFIED ENJOYMENT OF GOD IN HIS HOUSE AND CITY THROUGH THE SUFFERING, EXALTED, AND REIGNING CHRIST (2, 3)

In this message we will begin to consider Psalm 45, the highest and the greatest of the one hundred fifty psalms. To enter into the significance of such a psalm is not easy. All seventeen verses of Psalm 45 are quite common, but the way this psalm presents Christ is very peculiar.

The title of this psalm tells us that it is a song of love. The word love in the title refers not to a father's love for his son but to the love between a male and a female. This is indicated by the fact that the Hebrew word for love here is in the feminine gender. Thus, the love in Psalm 45 is a feminine love.

In order to understand this psalm, we need to turn to the particular book in the Bible which is concerned with love—the Song of Songs. Psalm 45 is a psalm of love, and Song of Songs is a book of love. In that book the word love is used in both the masculine and the feminine gender. According to the English translation of Song of Songs, the Lord Jesus is called "the Beloved"; however, the Hebrew word is simply the word for love in the masculine gender. Likewise, when the Lord calls His seeker "My love," the Hebrew word for love is in the feminine gender. Moreover, Psalm 45:2a says, "You are fairer than the sons of men." This is similar to Song of Songs 5:10, where the seeker speaks of her beloved as "the chiefest among ten thousand." This is a further indication that Song of Songs helps us to understand Psalm 45.

In one of the life-study messages on Hosea 11—14, we pointed out that throughout Hosea Israel is depicted as the wife of Jehovah. However, when God's everlasting love is touched, Israel is called God's son (Hosea 11:1), indicating that Israel has the Father's life. God's everlasting love is not a love in affection, like the love of a husband toward a wife, but a love in life, like the love of a father toward a son. Love in affection does not transform, but love in life transforms people. It is in the Father's love, the love in life, that Israel is transformed. A husband who loves his wife in affection may spoil her, but a father who loves his son in life never spoils his son. Rather, a father's love in life perfects his son.

I am not suggesting that Christ's love for us as virgins, as those who are females in relation to Him (2 Cor. 11:2), is a love that can spoil us. According to the biblical truth, Christ's love does not spoil His believers. Nominal Christians, false Christians, do not know Christ's love. Genuine Christians, those who have a heart for the Lord, enjoy Christ's love, but they may enjoy it according to their own concept or feeling. As a result they are spoiled not by Christ's love itself but by

their wrong application of Christ's love. For instance, if you speak to them concerning the kingdom truth, dispensational punishment, and the casting of certain believers into the outer darkness (Matt. 22:13; 25:30), they may say, "You are teaching heresy. Jesus loves me. He is not cruel, and He would not put me into outer darkness. As long as Jesus loves me, everything is all right." This indicates that even genuine believers have been spoiled by their mistaken application of the love of Christ.

Such believers need to consider the book of Hebrews. Hebrews is a book not on Christ's love but on the kingdom. Regarding the kingdom, Hebrews gives us five warnings, and each of these warnings concerns either reward or punishment. Furthermore, in Hebrews we have two kinds of words. The first is the good word of God (6:5), the word of the beginning of Christ (v. 1), which is the milk the believers taste when they believe in the Lord (5:13). The second kind of word is the word of righteousness (v. 13), which is solid food (v. 14), embodying the thought of God's justice and righteousness in His dispensational and governmental dealings with His people. In Hebrews 12:5 through 7 we have such a word of righteousness. "You have completely forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when reproved by Him; for whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.' It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons." Today many believers do not want to hear such a word of righteousness. Instead, they prefer sugar-coated messages.

Psalm 45 is not on the Father's love; that is, it is not on love in life but on love in affection. This is why this psalm is called a song of love.

The first eight verses of this psalm are on the praise of Christ as the King from four directions: His fairness, His victory, His kingdom, and His virtues. First, the psalmist praises the King in His fairness (v. 2a), in His handsomeness. Christ is truly fair; He is really handsome.

Christ's fairness, however, is balanced by His victory (vv. 3-5). Many husbands who love their wives have fairness, but they do not have victory. Instead, they have defeat after defeat. Thus, they are not balanced. But Christ, having both fairness and victory, is balanced. Yes, He loves us, but, as the four Gospels reveal, He also exercises His victory with its requirements. Because of His victory, He has high requirements.

We see Christ's victory and His requirements not only in the Gospel of Matthew but even in the Gospel of John. For example, in John 15, a chapter which speaks about abiding in Christ, the Lord Jesus tells us that if we do not bear fruit, we will be cut off and lose the enjoyment of Christ (vv. 2, 6). Whereas all believers love Matthew 1:21 and 23, they may not appreciate 5:20, a verse which says that unless our righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, we will by no means enter into the kingdom of the

heavens. Likewise, today's believers may not pay attention to the parable for faithfulness in Matthew 25:14-30. Verse 30 says, "Cast out the useless slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." The point here is that Christ's fairness is balanced by His victory with its requirements. Hence, in Psalm 45 fairness and victory are a pair.

A second pair in this psalm involves Christ's kingdom (vv. 6-7) and His virtues (v. 8). The kingdom is higher than the victory. Christ's kingdom is the issue of His victory. If there were no victory, there would be no kingdom. Victory produces the kingdom. Because Christ has won the victory, the kingdom belongs to Him. The matter of His kingdom, however, is balanced by the sweetness of His virtues. Therefore, in the praise of Christ as the King in Psalm 45, there are two balanced pairs: fairness and victory, kingdom and virtues.

Psalm 45 can be considered the sixth station in the unveiling of Christ in the Psalms. The first station is Psalm 2; the second is Psalm 8; the third is Psalm 16; the fourth is Psalms 22—24; and the fifth is Psalm 40. In this message on Psalm 45 we will consider verses 9 through 17. Before we come to these verses, however, I would like to say a word concerning the Bible and the way to understand it. The Bible is a very particular, special, strange, and wonderful book. Because the Bible is such a book, it cannot be understood by the natural human mind. If we try to understand the Bible according to our natural mind, we will not have the proper understanding. Of course, in order to understand the Bible, we must exercise our mind. However, we should exercise not the natural mind but the renewed, enlightened mind. If we would understand the Bible, we must have a mind that is renewed and enlightened, that is, a mind whose understanding is under the divine light. Therefore, when we study the Bible, we should pray that the Lord will renew our mind and enlighten it.

If we do not have a renewed and enlightened mind, we will have trouble when studying Psalm 45, especially verses 9 through 15, which are about praising the king in the praising of the queen with the daughters of kings and with the virgins. We may be bothered by the fact that this king has so many women with him. The Bible teaches us that a man should have only one wife, and in the New Testament Paul tells us that an elder should be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2). But the king in Psalm 45 seems to be like a heathen king who has a great many wives and concubines. As we will see, what we have in this psalm is a matter not of ethics but of typology, and to understand this type we need a renewed, enlightened mind.

The Bible contains many symbols and types. ... The Old Testament also uses the tabernacle and the temple as symbols to unveil another aspect of the church. Eve, the tabernacle, and the temple are all photographs of the church. The church is not only Christ's counterpart, symbolized by Eve, but also God's house, God's dwelling place, symbolized first by the tabernacle and then by the temple. If we did not have these two symbols, we would not understand many of the details concerning the church being God's dwelling place. From this we see that the biblical way is to use symbols to portray spiritual things, and we need to keep this in mind as we come to Psalm 45.

Psalm 45 was written in praise of King Solomon, who was a symbol, a type, of Christ with a wife composed of many "daughters," of many believers. If God had no need of a king to symbolize Christ in this

way, Solomon would not have been created. The Bible clearly reveals that God's intention is that a man have only one wife, yet Solomon had hundreds of wives (1 Kings 11:1, 3). As far as Psalm 45 is concerned, we should understand this not ethically but typically. Ethically, Solomon should not have had many wives. Typically speaking, however, there was the need for a man with hundreds of wives so that God would have a particular type of the church composed of many believers from many nations. Solomon with his wives is a type of Christ with His corporate wife, a wife composed of believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9).

Solomon did not follow God's regulation about having only one wife, and many readers of the Bible would condemn him for this. Nevertheless, in Psalm 45, written in praise of Solomon, Solomon is a type of Christ as the One with a corporate wife. If we would understand this, we need a mind that is renewed and enlightened. If we are enlightened and renewed, we will realize that Psalm 45 is lovable. First, in verses 2 through 7, this psalm praises the king, Solomon, in his fairness, in his victory, in his kingdom, and in the sweetness of his virtues. After this, the psalmist continues by praising the king in the praising of his queen. The queen is not alone but is accompanied by the daughters of kings (v. 9) and by the virgins, her friends (v. 14). If we view this as a type, we will see that the king typifies Christ, that the queen typifies the church, and that those around the queen typify the believers. In type, this queen is not a single, individual person—she is corporate. The believers are the constituents, the components, of this corporate queen. Actually, the believers are both the constituents of the queen and the honorable and beautiful women.

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for the young people to sanctify their time to pursue the Lord with their companions.
- Pray for us to be a fruitful bearing branch.
- Pray for the growth of the feeling of the Body of Christ.
- Pray for spreading to nearby cities
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.

Announcement

- Morning Revival on Psalms Week 7
- YP Bible reading : John chapter 2.
- Prayer meeting 7:30PM on Tuesday (11/1) at brother Robert Tien's home.
- Winter training Anaheim registration: register with brothers in each group. Deadline is 11/1.
- Church in Campbell love feast, hymns singing and blending 10/31, 6PM at meeting hall.
- 11/05 8:30am Sat. Video training message 7 & 8 at Campbell meeting hall – open to everyone.
- 11/23 or 24 ~ 27, UC Davis students (~20) will visit and blend with us during the Thanksgiving Conference, and will need us to provide hospitality.
- 11/06 Lord's day Day Ligh Saving Time ends.