

“Captured By Love”

Understanding God’s Eternal Purpose!

Romans 8:28-29

Introduction:

Many of us have had the wonderful experience of “falling in love” – of being “**smitten**” in a relationship which becomes a life-long experience of “**oneness**” in marriage. That experience can be described as being “**captured**” by a love relationship! Remarkably, this human experience is filled with eternal purpose – the blueprint of what God had in mind when he created us for relationship with Him for eternity!! Even if meaningful marriage has not been our experience in life, we can still observe and appreciate God’s intention for the relationship of human marriage.

*“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who **love** God, to those who are **called** according to **His purpose**. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become **conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the **firstborn among many brethren**.”* Romans 8:28-29

The heart of the Son of God toward His Father was careful obedience to His will! This is what “**love**” looked like between Father and Son. So, because we are created in God’s image, we have the capacity to be born again into the “image” of the Son of God. God **grows us** as His children into the same **image – that of His Son!** This is God’s eternal purpose for each of His children! **This is His heart’s desire!**

→ This morning, I want to talk to you about your “Heart” . . . what has “captured” your heart?

→ Fact: Each of us is living . . . “captured” or “controlled” by what we **love** in our heart!

Interesting Background to our Study:

In the Book of Job, 1:6-12, when that Godly man, Job, and his family were coming to an altar to worship God, Satan came into that time of worship, and challenged God with this “accusation”, *“Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge about him and his house and all he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. **But put forth your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.**”*

God’s reply set forth **the underlying battle between Satan and God in human history**: *“Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.”* (You may “**test**” his heart!)

Satan’s Challenge to God: *“No one will love You for **who** You are; they will only love You for **what** You do for them!”*

--**Note**: These events occurred **before** God called Abraham to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees to **found a Nation (“Israel”)** who would be God’s “**Chosen People**”!

I. In the Word of God, the Relationship Between a Believer and Jesus Christ is intended to be the “_____” Relationship in Life, “_____” than any other Relationship!

“God is faithful, through whom you were **called** into **fellowship** with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” I Corinthians 1:9

--“**Fellowship**” is sharing a “_____” of heart and mind.

“This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that **God is Light**, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have **fellowship** with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but **if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light**, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” I John 1:5-7

--**Note:** Any failure to “_____” in the Light (Jesus Christ), God calls “_____”!

Question: Do I actually understand God’s “_____” for my life?

Observation: Many Christians limit God’s purpose to being an escape from _____!

Observation: Many Christians do not understand that “salvation” is a living “_____” relationship!

--Becoming a Christian is not like _____ a _____! (A business contract!)

--Becoming a Christian is like entering into “_____”!

1) Marriage is a commitment to becoming “_____”!

2) Marriage is a commitment to “_____” to another person!

Illustration from Marriage: “He doesn’t even _____ me!”

--**Question:** “Is this couple married?”

“Is this a meaningful relationship?”

--**Penetrating Question:** How many years of relationship do you have with Jesus Christ?

5/10/20/30 years? What would He “_____” about your relationship with Him?

II. The Relationship Between a Believer and Jesus Christ must be “_____” by “_____” Loves!

“You **adulteresses**, do you not know that **friendship with the world** is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be **a friend of the world** makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: ‘He **jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?**’” --James 4:4-5

--**What is “friendship with the world”?**

--**What is the meaning of “He jealously desires the Spirit . . . ”?**

A. God takes this **seriously!!!** It really matters to Him!

--**Israel’s O.T. history:** Jeremiah 32:30, 33-34

“Indeed the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah have been doing only evil in My sight from their youth, for the sons of Israel have been only provoking Me to anger by the work of their hands, declares the LORD . . . They have **turned their back to Me and not their face**; though I taught them, teaching them again and again, **they would not listen and receive instruction**. But they put their **detestable things** in the house which is called by My name, to **defile** it.”

--God sees **rejection** of His love as “**Idolatry**” and “**Spiritual Adultery**”!

--**Note:** God “**set Israel aside**” temporarily because of their **rejection** of His love and chose a different group → A group of “**Called-Out Ones**” who would “**Love**” Him from the heart →

The “ _____ ”

--**Note:** Jesus Christ would “ _____ ” their hearts!

*“Do not love **the world** nor **the things** in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does **the will of God** lives forever.”* I John 2:15-17

--**Note: The “World-System”:**

→ Satan is the “ _____ ” of this **World-System!** (II Cor. 4:4)

→ It is structured to demand “ _____ ” to its values/approval! (Rom. 12:2)

→ It is described in Scripture as a “ _____ ”! (II Timothy 4:3-4)

(A “concoction” of the mind!)

--**Contrast: Personal Love of the “Good Shepherd”:**

→ Jesus is the “ _____ ” of His Sheep” (John 10:1-5)

→ **Key:** Whose “ _____ ” do I hear?

--The “Shepherd” Who walks in the “ _____ ”? or,

--The “Thief”, the “Robber”, the “Wolf” who walks in “ _____ ”?

--**The Future for the Child of God:**

“For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” II Corinthians 5:10

III. What Does It Mean to be “Captured” by the Love of Christ?

A. **Mary Magdalene:**

“And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner . . . and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.” Luke 7:37-38

B. **Simon Peter:**

“And He said to Him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’“ John 21:17

Conclusion: Satan’s “Challenge” has been answered: We, the “**Church**”, are an “**Eternal Proof**” that the love of Jesus Christ can . . .

“**Capture**” **The Heart!**

→ This is God’s Eternal “ _____ ”.

→ He takes this very “ _____ ”.

→ _____ should _____.

*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, 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, **so that in the ages to come** He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

Ephesians 2:4-7