

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Message 1

Week 1 – Monday

Gen. 2:18-25 – Footnotes 18¹, 21¹, 25¹

Saints, it surely is a joy to be with you all. This weekend we are going to cover a topic that is quite broad. I want to give you key words that will guide our fellowship for the four meetings that we will have in this conference. The topic is really two parts. Some of you may understand how they go together but new ones among us will wonder how these two phrases go together. Actually, these two topics are put together in the Bible quite a number of times. We read some of the key verses already.

The first one is the divine romance; the other one is spiritual warfare. From a certain angle you can say that the whole Bible is just about these two topics. The Bible begins with a couple. That fact is showing us something; it shows what is in the heart of God. This is a great gospel. We should tell people, “Do you know what the Bible is about? It is about a romance.” I don’t think that many people have this concept. I don’t know if they practice this here in Canada; do your hotels have Bibles in the rooms. You used to—oh, that’s too bad. That’s not a good sign. Even in America we still have Bibles in our hotel rooms. You find a Bible in nearly every room of every hotel that you go to. Except these days in certain chains you find the Bible plus one or two other books. When I find them I always stack them and put the Bible on top. Actually, people would like to know what the Bible is about. It is really a mystery. Many would say, “I read a little but I didn’t understand.” We can tell them that the Bible is a romance. It begins with a couple and it ends with a couple.

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Week 1 – Tuesday

Eph. 5:25-27 – Footnotes 26¹, 26², 26³, 26⁴, 27¹, 27², 27³, 27⁴, 27⁵

From another angle you can say that the whole Bible is about a war, a battle between two parties. This warfare is because of the romance. This warfare is attempting to counter that romance. We want to see that this is our experience every day. My main burden this evening is to show you how this is our experience, not only every day, but as soon as wake up. Every morning we awaken to one of these topics or both.

God's central work that He wants to do (you could say that it is the only thing He wants to do) is to dispense Himself into us, His chosen and redeemed people. He wants to dispense Himself into each one of us personally. Out of this dispensing that something would be produced, a corporate entity that expresses and represents God and consummates in the New Jerusalem. That is actually what God is doing today. Regardless of what we are doing, regardless if we are at work, at home with children, on an aeroplane, or in a car going somewhere, God is doing His dispensing. We also trust and pray that He is doing this right now in this meeting in a more intensified way. Until our head hits the pillow tonight and maybe even after that, God wants to continue that work. He wants to dispense Himself into us.

That dispensing work that God wants to do is not something objective or cold. It is not just that there is a God with a purpose so He created these creatures with whom He wants to carry out His purpose with the creatures He created. It is not so cold. Actually, He wants to carry this out through an intimate, personal and tailor made dispensing. His dispensing is measured to each of us. As our high priest He understands and is interceding behind the scenes that we would receive certain supply and certain aspects of Him that we never experienced before. As this is going on we fall in love with Him; we love Him.

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Week 1 – Wednesday

Luke 15:3-7 – Footnote 3¹

I still remember the night that this dispensing began in me. I was just a seven year old little boy in Brooklyn New York on Friday July 13th. This little boy received God's dispensing for the first time. My older sister was almost 17 and was preparing a Sunday school lesson. We grew up in the Brethren denomination and my sister loved the Lord very much and started serving the Lord as a young teenager. She was teaching a group of 8 year old girls and was preparing her lesson Friday evening. I happened to be in the same room because we lived in a small apartment where the dining room and living room area were in the same room. As she was preparing on the dining room table I was watching my favourite TV show in the living room area. At 8:15 when there was a commercial break I went to the kitchen to get something to eat. As I passed by I saw that my sister was preparing something. I asked her, "What are you doing?" She had some cutouts for a flannel graph. It had little pictures. The kids today don't know what that is; today they would only know PowerPoint. That interested me and then she told me a story about a man who had 100 sheep. You know this story, but remember that I was 7 years old. Then he lost one of the sheep! She had a picture of a flock of sheep and another of a man who she said was a shepherd because he was holding a stick. Then there was one sheep that was away from the rest. She moved the man over saying he found the sheep. Then she took off that picture of the shepherd and put on another one with the sheep on the man's shoulders. She asked me, "Do you know who the lost sheep is?" I said, "No." She said, "It is you." I said, "Really?" Then she said, "You know the picture of the man holding the sheep? That's what Jesus was doing on the cross. He was holding all the sheep, bringing them home." I think that at that instant, even before I prayed a few minutes later, I got saved because the love of the Lord just flooded this little boy. At that moment I knew the love of God. Then she took all the pictures off the flannel graph and replaced them with a heart with a door. When you opened the door there was a little man inside. Then she used a verse from Revelation chapter 3 which says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door I will come into him and feast with him and he with Me." Then she asked me, "Would you like to open your heart to the Lord?" I said, "Yes." We went to her room and knelt down and this little boy got saved. That was my first experience of dispensing. It surely was a sweet dispensing. Even though it was so many years ago I remember those details like it was last night. It was more than 50 years ago. The dispensing was so sweet.

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Week 1 – Thursday

Rev. 19:7-8, 14 – Footnotes 7¹, 14¹, 14²

I think that all of us have had experiences of the sweet dispensing that is so personal, so intimate, so affectionate, and so spiritual. That is how the Lord accomplishes His dispensing, but the enemy will always come to attempt to interrupt the dispensing. So the Bible puts these two matters together a number of times. We read Ephesians chapter 5, verses 25-27, and then we read chapter 6, verses 10-12. What do you see in Ephesians 5? The bride. What do you see in Ephesians 6? The corporate warrior of God. No book unveils the church the way Ephesians does. Ephesians shows us at least 12 different aspects of the church but these are the final two—the bride and the warrior. Actually it is through the bride that the Lord gets His expression.

This we see in the book of the Song of Songs. In the Song of Songs the lover is transformed to be the same as the Beloved, the female version of Solomon. She is called the Shulamite, the feminine version of Solomon. At the end of the Bible you see the New Jerusalem prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; that is the church at its consummation. So the bride is really for expression. Now we come to the warrior; the warrior is to fulfill the other intention in Genesis 1:26. The bride is to express God; the warrior is to exercise His dominion. Actually, these two aspects of the bride and the warrior fulfill Genesis 1:26.

This is not the only place where we can see this; we also see it in Revelation 19, verses 7-8 and 14. In verses 7 and 8 it says that the marriage of the Lamb has come and the bride has made herself ready. She is adorned in fine linen, bright and clean. Then just a few verses later in verse 14, the scene changes and the Lord is coming to fight the Antichrist. He comes with his armies who are dressed in fine linen, bright and pure. In other words, they are dressed in their wedding dresses. Here the Bible puts together the ultimate marriage with the warrior. When the Lord comes back we also have the romance and the warrior just as Ephesians puts together the bride and the warrior.

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Week 1 – Friday

2 Cor. 11:2-3 – Footnote 3²

Gen. 3:1-6 – Footnotes 1¹, 1³, 2¹, 5¹

In 2 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 3 and in chapter 10 verse 5 The Bible also puts the romance and the warfare together. Chapter 11, verses 2 and 3 say, “For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” Here the Bible clearly shows us through Paul’s speaking that we were betrothed. When we were saved we got betrothed to our Beloved. The apostle is saying, “I am jealous over you because in those early days you loved the Lord purely.” But then he says, “I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.”

Now we come to my real burden: this warfare is very subjective and daily for each one of us. This warfare is now taking place within our being. Did you experience this today? Were your thoughts corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ? When the enemy, the serpent, Satan came to Eve, he came with a suggestion; he came with a question: “Did God really say...?” and she had some conversation with the serpent. Then he said, “God knows that in the day that you eat this you will become like God.” The implication is that God is keeping something good from you; God is not telling you the whole story. Satan was actually accusing God. Very often Satan comes to accuse us: “You did this, you are so bad.” But did you know that Satan first came to accuse God? He accused God to man saying that God’s heart is not altogether good towards you. Even up to today he tries the same tactic. Sometimes if we are not on guard we begin to think, “Does the Lord really love me? If He is faithful, why has this prayer not been answered?” Satan comes with his suggestions. One little thought can come as a seed that grows to bankrupt our spiritual life. Satan tries to suggest his thoughts into our thoughts. This is his strategy.

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Week 1 – Saturday

2 Cor. 10:3-5 – Footnotes 3¹, 4¹, 5¹, 5²

2 Cor. 2:11

Eph. 6:16 – Footnotes 16¹, 16², 16³

Second Corinthians chapter 10, verse 3 says, “For though we walk in flesh, we do not war according to flesh.” The next chapter is talking about being betrothed to the Lord, but this chapter is talking about warfare. Verses 4 and 5 say, “For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds, as we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.” Here the Bible is exposing Satan strategy. He comes to attack us in our thoughts. I would recommend that you would do a study of the word *thoughts* in 2nd Corinthians. Chapter 2, verse 11 says, “That we may not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” Do you know that the root of the word *schemes* is the word *thoughts* or *mind*? You could translate this as “We are not ignorant of his mind or of his thoughts.” Whose thoughts? Satan’s thoughts.

Ephesians 6:16 talks about the flaming darts of the evil one. The word *flaming darts* is not talking about the kind of darts that we know today. It is not talking about a little board where you throw this little thing to try to get into the middle of the dartboard; that is not what the Bible is talking about. The flaming darts there are what was used in the ancient times where the major defence for a city was a wall. When an army was attacking they would take arrows and wrap the tip of the arrow in some cloth, dip it in oil, and light it so that it was on fire. Then they would shoot the arrow over the wall. It didn’t have to be precise. It was not like the smart bombs today where you can see them go right into the target. This is just shooting it over the wall and if you shoot enough of them over the wall, something is going to catch fire. That is how the enemy works. Has this happened to you this morning? You come to the Lord to spend some time with Him. Then a thought comes: “Oh, I forgot to call brother Ron. What time is it? Should I call him, should I text him?” Maybe right there you do text him. Then you remember: “Oh, I need to come back to the Bible. Amen. In the beginning was the Word. Amen.” Then another thought comes: “Oh, do I have a dental appointment, or is that tomorrow?” Did you ever spend part of your morning time with the Lord in this kind of realm? Then as soon as you come back another dart comes. Today it was difficult for me because I was travelling. I tried to spend time with the Lord and then: “Oh, do I have my passport? Yes, okay.” “Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus.” “Oh, did I take care of this?” It is very possible that when you try to spend 15 minutes with the Lord, 13 minutes are occupied by the darts.