

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Week 7 – Monday

Rev. 19:7-8, 14

Lord Jesus we love You. Lord, we thank You that we could be gathered here together into Your name. We tell You that You are our first love. You have the preeminence in this gathering. We honour You as our Head. We also tell You that we love You as our dear Bridegroom. Lord You are our focus and our aim. We love You Lord Jesus and we give this time to You. We ask that You would breathe on Your word. Speak to every one of us. We thank You for Your living word. We declare that we live by every word that proceeds out of Your mouth. We are hungry for more of You. Lord, we also realize that You have an enemy. As You are building Your church we know that he will always contest; even he may try to attack our thoughts here. We pray that You would give us the whole armour of God even in this meeting. Give us the shield of faith; give us the helmet of salvation; protect us. We love You Lord. Amen.

We have been enjoying the matters of the divine romance and the spiritual warfare. Actually, I don't know if you can say that we have been enjoying the spiritual warfare but we have been seeing something about the spiritual warfare. We have seen that in the scriptures these two matters of the bride and the corporate warrior have been put together quite a number of times. We saw some of these portions. For example, we just read these verses in Ephesians chapter 6, but Ephesians chapter 5 shows that the church is the bride. Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. His intention is to gain His bride that He might present the church to Himself glorious as His counterpart. In chapter 6 is the matter of warfare: "Put on the whole armour of God." So the church is a corporate warrior. Once we get to the details, the first point that I hope we can see is that though the armour has its application to us personally, actually only the church can have the whole armour of God. So, if you want to experience and enjoy the protection of the armour of God, you must be practically in the Body. You must be in the church life to have the experience of the whole armour of God.

Not only are these two matters close together in Ephesians 5 and 6, Revelation chapter 19 has these two matters just a few verses apart. There is a declaration before the Lord comes: "The bride has made herself ready." Praise the Lord! One day this will be declared. The bride has made herself ready and she is clothed with fine linen, bright and pure (vv. 7-8). Of course, then the Lord comes for His bride. Then just a few verses later we see that when the Lord comes to fight the Antichrist and his armies, He does not come alone (v. 14). The Lord comes with His armies, but it is very interesting that His armies are clothed with fine linen, bright and pure just like the bride a few verse before. So this shows us that that bride is these armies; that bride is God's corporate warrior.

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Week 7 – Tuesday

Gen. 1:26 – Footnotes 26⁴, 26⁵

Actually, these two aspects of the church combined accomplish God's desire that we see on the first page of the Bible. On the first page of the Bible, God says, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion.” So we see image and dominion. The meaning of our existence is God's eternal purpose; apart from God's purpose we have no meaning. God's purpose can be summarized in these two words: *image* and *dominion*. The image is for God's expression; He wants to have a corporate expression in this universe. We sang hymn 203 today: “In the bosom of the Father, Ere the ages had begun...” Verse 4 of that hymn develops the matter of image and expression:

We're Thy total reproduction,
Thy dear Body and Thy Bride,
Thine expression and Thy fulness,
For Thee ever to abide.
We are Thy continuation,”

The bride is God's expression and then the warrior fulfills the matter of dominion to represent God and to exercise God's authority on this earth. So the bride and the warrior are linked to Genesis 1:26. No wonder they are put together so many times in the Bible.

Then we saw in the Song of Songs the story about the love affair, the love relationship, between God and His people. There the king represents Christ and the country girl that eventually becomes the queen represents us. She is brought through her relationship, through her love of the Lord, through stages to become the Shulamite. *Shulamite* is the feminine form of the name *Solomon*. So she is his match, his counterpart. Then we saw the verses where the Lord says, “You are lovely and terrible.” If one of our brothers would say as he is courting his fiancée, “Oh my love, you are lovely and terrible”, I don't think that she would take this in a proper way. This means that to the Lord we are lovely; to the enemy we are terrible. When a young man is courting a young girl, it really should be this way: to her beloved, lovely, and to every other guy, terrible; to every competition, terrible. Actually, the Lord is jealous over us in this way.

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Week 7 – Wednesday

2 Cor. 11:2-3 – Footnote 3²

That brings us to 2 Corinthians chapter 11 where Paul is speaking to the Corinthian believers who are his spiritual children. In the first letter to them he tells them, “I am your spiritual father; I begot you in Christ Jesus. You don't have many fathers; you have so many teachers but you don't have many fathers. In the gospel I have begotten you.” That is in the first letter, but in the second letter he says, “I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God because I betrothed you to one Husband.” This is very interesting; this means that when Paul preached the gospel to them and they got saved, in Paul's thought he was betrothing them to Christ. When we got saved, we got into a love relationship with the Lord. Our Saviour became our Bridegroom; we were engaged to our Saviour.

After Paul says, “For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God”, he goes on to say, “But 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” (vv. 2-3). When we meet the Lord, things are very simple; we just love Him. But the enemy will attack that simple love for the Lord all the time. The enemy wants to interrupt that sweet dispensing that we experience. This is not only when we are first saved; every morning when we want to spend time with the Lord and open to Him, it seems that the enemy is threatened by this. So he will come in to interject what seem to be benign thoughts, just little thoughts. We think that those are our thoughts, our thoughts about our day or our thoughts about yesterday. Sometimes we are praying and remember a dream, and we just get distracted for 2 or 3 minutes. If you are distracted for 2 or 3 minutes but you are only planning on spending 10 minutes with the Lord, that is significant. But the thing is that it does not happen only once; as soon as you realize: “Oh, oh, amen, Lord Jesus I love You” and you come back, isn't it your experience that after 30 seconds, another thought comes from the other side? Then you get carried away for another 2 minutes. Now we are up to 4 or 5 minutes, then we come back but the time is up. Have you never experienced this? What is that? That is the divine romance and the spiritual warfare in your bedroom; that is the divine romance and the spiritual warfare wherever it is that you set apart a time to be with the Lord. This is very subjective and personal.

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Week 7 – Thursday

Eph. 6:23-24 – Footnotes 23², 23³, 24¹, 24²

In this message we want to focus on the matter of the whole armour of God. We will cover a certain number of details, but I want to make my burden clear at the beginning so that you do not lose the focus. My burden this morning is simply on the matter of the shield of faith. Ephesians 6:16 says, “Having taken up the shield of faith.” I specifically added verse 23 to the reading concerning the armour of God. Verse 23 is almost the final verse of the book of Ephesians. The book of Ephesians unveils the church more than any other book in the whole Bible. It covers at least 12 aspects of the church, and the final 2 are the bride and the corporate warrior, but the book ends with faith; actually faith and love. Verses 23 and 24 say, “Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.” These verses mention four things: peace, love, faith, and grace. A number of the epistles begin with a greeting concerning grace and peace. Paul often started his letters with grace and peace saying, “Grace and peace to you.” So here he concludes this letter with grace and peace, but in between these he inserted two things: love and faith.

Here Paul writes in a very particular way: not love and faith but love with faith. These two matters, love and faith, are so basic in our Christian life. In the first message I gave a little bit of my testimony. I know that all our experiences of salvation are so varied. No two of us got saved in exactly the same way. We all have a personal story and history with the Lord; all of these are precious. But that night, Friday July 13, when I was seven years old, do you know what I experienced? It was not first grace and peace; I experienced love with faith. First love came through the preaching of the simple gospel through my sister. That love that reached me, those words that reached me, somehow produced faith. So love came from God to me and faith went from me to God and connected me with Him. Since that night the triune God and I have been connected. How? Love with faith. You too, wherever you were, somehow love reached you through someone sharing the gospel; whether it was personal, one on one, whether it was in a gospel meeting, or whether for some of our second generation it was even in the children's meeting. I had the privilege to bring the gospel to each of my three children in my study. I knelt down with them one by one at different times to help them experience love and faith.

First Thessalonians talks about the armour in a little different way. This letter was to younger believers and it actually talks about the breastplate of love and faith (5:8). Love and faith are a kind of breastplate because they both have to do with our heart. Love with faith is so important every day of our Christian journey.

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Week 7 – Friday

Eph. 3:16-17 – Footnotes 16¹, 17¹, 17², 17⁴

Sometimes we call Ephesians 3:16-17 the heart of the heart of the heart of the divine revelation. Those verses are a prayer that the Father would grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith that you, being rooted and grounded in love.... I don't know exactly when it was, but a number of years ago I was inspired in a conference meeting, maybe a semi-annual training, and from that time, these verses have become my prayer every day of my life, especially in the morning. I was about 16 or 17 and I have been praying these two verses day after day: “Lord, please make more of Your home in my heart today, even a little bit more.” Then this day counts. If by the time my head hits the pillow the Lord has made His home in my heart just a little bit more, that was a good day; that day counts.

Some may not have heard why we call these verses the heart of the heart of the heart of the divine revelation? We consider that the heart of the divine revelation is really found in the books Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. These four books unveil the church in a very particular way. But of all these, Ephesians is the heart; and then of Ephesians, these verses are the heart. They are the personal experience of Christ making His home in our heart. That is how Christ builds the church. By building Himself into you a little bit more every day, and into me a little bit more every day, and then we come together and there is more building of the church. But do you realize that faith and love are here? This is my point in bringing this out. Christ is making His home in our hearts through *faith* that you being rooted and grounded in *love*. Even in these most critical verses are faith and love.

We are talking about the divine romance and the spiritual warfare. Even though in a sense we are going to focus on the spiritual warfare today by covering the armour of God, our focus should be the divine romance. Our focus should be on the Lord Himself, on building up that sweet, intimate relationship with Him. Of course, as we do that the enemy will come, but the goal is to enter into this fellowship with the Lord. For this, we need love with faith. Our love for the Lord depends on the health of our faith. Hebrews says that Christ is the author and perfecter of our faith (12:2). Verse 1 of that chapter gives the picture of a race. How can you have the endurance to run this Christian race under so much adversity? You need to look away unto Jesus. What does it mean to look away unto Jesus? What does it mean to look at Jesus? We don't see Jesus physically. Actually, this is talking about faith; faith sees the unseen things. We need to be healthy in our faith. When we have faith, we will have love. If our faith is attacked or weakened, it is possible that our love for the Lord wanes and we can't do anything about it. We need to get our faith renewed and this is my burden in this message: the shield of faith.

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Week 7 – Saturday

Eph. 6:10-12 – Footnotes 10⁴, 11¹, 11², 12¹

Let us start with Ephesians 6, verse 10 which says, “Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.” As we pointed out previously, it does not say here, “Be powerful.” Thank the Lord that it does not say that. Many of would quit right here. Instead of “Be powerful” it says, “Be empowered.” This means that it is only demanding your cooperation, not your power. It is demanding your will and your cooperation, but not your self energy. Be empowered! When we cooperate with the Lord He will empower us.

Verse 11 says, “Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil.” I would like to emphasize a point here that I mentioned briefly before. To put on the whole armour is a matter of the Body. We must be practically in the fellowship of the Body of Christ. We are not expected to be super Christians; we are expected to be members of the Body. When we are in the Body, we have the protection of the Body. In a good sense, the Body is the armour. The Body of Christ already has the armour; when you get into the Body, you have the protection of the armour. Imagine, and we have seen stories like this in history, that there is a battle and one of the soldiers gets separated from the rest of his battalion. Isn't that dangerous to be in enemy territory all by yourself? The protection is in the army. The protection for us is in the Body.

What the enemy would want to do is to isolate us. How does he come to isolate us? I am not saying that we need to be together all the time, that the enemy will attack every time we are not with other saints. No. We can be by ourselves at school, at work, at home, but we are in the Body. Prison did not isolate Paul from the Body. Actually, Paul wrote all of these verses in Ephesians 6 from a prison. Not only was he in prison, he was chained as he wrote, “I am an ambassador in a chain.” That means that when he was writing he was chained to the soldier next to him. He could not get away. Paul was also in prison when he wrote Philippians. There he said, “I know that this will turn out to my salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (1:19). Wherever we are we can have the supply of the Body; we can have the supply of the Spirit. That is why we must pray for one another. Sisters, don't you think of some of the saints as you are about your daily affairs? The thought of some of the saints is the Spirit moving in you. You may not realize that that particular saint is going through a particular attack of the enemy right at that time. We should just offer a prayer, even if the prayer is just to mention their name: “Oh Lord, remember so and so.” Maybe you think of the brothers who minister here and there, I hope you would pray for us; we need the Lord's protection. So it is not a small thing for a believer to just remember someone. Through our prayer they receive the bountiful supply of the Spirit. So the armour is for the Body.

Verse 12 says, “For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.” This is very fundamental but we must remember that our fighting is not against blood and flesh. No human being is our enemy; we should never take any human being as our enemy. There is an enemy behind and we need to have our warfare in that realm. We pray; we don't take any person as our enemy.