

## **Having a Personal, Intimate, Affectionate Contact with the Lord Jesus**

The One in the house at Bethany who was loved by a seeking woman was Jesus, the wonderful person, the Word who was from the beginning and was God Himself (1:1). Since Jesus is God, it seems that Mary should have knelt before Him in a reverent way. However, Mary did not do this. She simply poured the ointment upon Him and wiped His feet with her hair. To love the Lord in this way is not to render Him religious worship like the worship the Jews rendered to God at the altar in the temple. The best worship we can render to our Lord is to tell Him, "I love You, Lord Jesus." While Mary was anointing and wiping Jesus' feet with her hair, the priests were worshipping God in the temple by offering the sacrifices and burning the incense. However, where was God at that time? God was not in the temple in Jerusalem but in that small house in Bethany, enjoying the love of His seeking believer.

The religious ones would not have agreed with what happened at that house in Bethany. They might have said, "In order to worship God, I must go to the temple in Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice on the altar through a priest. Why should I go to that little house in Bethany?" However, the very God whom the religious priests sought to worship was Jesus, who was at Bethany. .... Although Jesus is the infinite God, His loving seekers can contact Him not only as God but also as a man, loving Him, talking to Him, and reclining on His breast (13:25). What we need today is not only to learn from Him, appreciate His greatness, and worship Him as God, but even the more to have a personal, direct, and affectionate contact with Him, speaking with Him in a human and intimate way. We all need to be revolutionized in our way of contacting the Lord.

We love to contact the Lord by calling, "O Lord Jesus. O Jesus!" ... We must all love the Lord Jesus and practice a personal, intimate contact with Him all day long by calling on His name. We need to give up our old religious knowledge and teachings so that the living person of Jesus can become our enjoyment and experience. In the Gospel of John the center is not religious forms or doctrines. The center is the wonderful person of Jesus. We have no words to describe Him in full. We simply need to tell Him, "Lord, Jesus, we love You. We simply want to remain in intimate contact with You." – (Having a Personal, Intimate, Affectionate, Tender, and Loving Contact with the Lord Jesus; Living Stream Ministry)

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Dear saints, in this chapter I want to impress you with something particular. After you have received Christ as your life, you must have a very personal seeking after Christ. No one can represent you or do anything for you in this matter. It must be personal. Every believer's relationship with Christ must be personal and affectionate.

God works in a personal and affectionate way, not in the way of a movement. ... A person can be moved to join a movement and not have any personal contact with the Lord. Recently, we have stressed that God became a man that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Although many responded to this truth, I was not very happy, because this response was a movement. In order to practice such a high truth, we need the personal and affectionate experience of Christ.

In these days I feel very much that there is a warm, intimate, close affection between me and my God. The seeker said, "Draw me." She did not say, "Draw us." Draw me is personal. We want a drawing from the Lord that is His personal and affectionate doing. We want Him to be with us in a personal and affectionate way. ... Regardless of how great, sovereign, almighty, and majestic God is, when He wanted to build up His relationship with man, He took the personal, affectionate way. He took the way of becoming a man. If the Lord Jesus had come to Peter in a majestic way, Peter would have felt threatened. But He did not come to Peter as the majestic, untouchable God. Instead, He came to Peter as his countryman. Peter was a Galilean, and Jesus was also a Galilean. This is personal and affectionate.

The Lord Jesus lived among men for thirty-three and a half years. This was the way in which God came to build up His relationship with man. This is the personal, affectionate way recorded in the New Testament from the incarnation to the day of resurrection. On the morning of His resurrection the Lord's empty tomb was discovered by three sisters (Mark 16:1 , 8). When they entered into the tomb, an angel gave them a message from the Lord, saying, "Go, tell His disciples and Peter" (v. 7). Peter's name mentioned in this way is personal and affectionate. Peter's intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus was particular, so it was stressed even by the angel. At the beginning of his contact with the Lord, Peter's response was not too personal, but gradually, Peter's transaction with the Lord became personal and affectionate.

The apostle John could recline on the Lord's bosom (John 13:23). How personal and affectionate that was! The very God, the very Lord whom we seek, sets up a feast and invites us to feast with Him (Rev. 3:20). We must have such a personal and affectionate contact with Him. If we mail someone a letter, that affects him in a certain way. But if we come to him with a personal visitation and an affectionate contact, that makes a great difference.

Hymn 437 – "Captivated by His beauty"

Only the face of tears that Peter saw, only the face of glory into which Stephen looked, and only the heart that wept with Mary can keep us away from the idols, the attractions, of this world. The Bible tells us that Jesus wept with Mary (John 11:35). Have you ever heard that God weeps? Many say that Jesus came to express God, but they mainly refer to the miracles that He did, not to the tears that He shed.

Dear saints, my burden in this chapter is to share that you have to start seeking the Lord in a personal and affectionate way. I want to stress these two words: personal and affectionate. The very God whom we pursue is personal and affectionate.

We all need this kind of personal, affectionate, intimate contact with the Lord every day. This has become my habit. Every morning after rising up I go to my desk, and the first thing I say is, "Lord Jesus, I love You." I am not just a poor man praying to a merciful God, but I am contacting a Savior who is personal and affectionate to me, as I am personal and affectionate to Him. We all need to take heed to what the seeker says: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" Right away her tone changes: "Your love is better than wine." This is a personal, intimate prayer. "Draw me; we will run after you." This is personal and affectionate. We need this kind of personal and affectionate

seeking after Him, and we need to build up such a relationship with Him that is so personal and affectionate. – (Crystallization-study of Song of Songs, Living Stream Ministry)

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In the previous chapter we saw that in order to practically experience the Lord as life, we must first have a love relationship with Him. Song of Songs in the Old Testament depicts such an experience. The Lord desires to be our life, but we must have a loving response toward Him. Our experience of the Lord's life is not a matter of religion or regulations but entirely a story of love between us and Him. A person may have religious zeal and agree with all kinds of regulations, but he may not have an intimate and affectionate love for the Lord. In order to experience the Lord as our life, we must have a personal and intimate love for Him. ... This is the necessary requirement for the Lord's seekers to practically experience Him as life.

Everyone who experiences the Lord in love first discovers an inward emptiness, dissatisfaction, and restlessness. Everything in the universe has its laws; life also has its laws. ... One of the laws in Song of Songs is that a person first must love the Lord in order to experience Him. Religious zeal alone is not sufficient. We must be inwardly touched by the Lord's love, attracted by Him, and have a loving response toward Him. Once a person has a loving response toward the Lord and rises up to pursue Him in love, he discovers that he is empty, dissatisfied, and restless inwardly. He realizes that apart from the Lord nothing in the universe is lovable, and neither is there anything that can satisfy him and give him rest. Following this, he has a deeper request, asking the Lord where He pastures His flock and makes it lie down, that is, where those who pursue Him can be fed and find satisfaction and rest. Because he seeks in this way, the Lord shows him that the way to receive satisfaction and rest is to go forth on the footsteps of the flock. The flock denotes the church. Only by walking on the way of the church can one have the satisfaction and rest of the Lord. Eventually, the seeker feasts with the Lord, enjoys Him as the apple tree, and fully tastes the sweetness of His fruit in His shade. Everyone who loves the Lord has this experience in the process of pursuing Him.

Although some brothers and sisters regularly come to the meetings, they have never been touched by the Lord inwardly. Their coming to the meetings is like the religious attendance of a Sunday service: there is no expression of love for the Lord within them, and there is no personal experience of love between them and the Lord. It is very difficult to help this kind of person. Teachings and exhortations are useless. We can only pray for such a one and ask the glory of the Lord to appear to him, because once the glory of the Lord appears, a person's heart is drawn by Him. The Lord listens to this kind of prayer. In this way some have responded in love to the Lord and have been raised up by Him to love and pursue Him. Such a person comes to the meeting joyfully, livingly, and with a shining face, as if he is soaring in the air. He experiences and testifies that Christ truly is his satisfaction. He inwardly touches the Lord's presence; reading the Bible is enjoyable to him; and praying, attending meetings, and preaching the gospel all make him happy. In all his spiritual activities he richly senses the Lord's presence, so much so that he feels as if he is living a heavenly life on the earth. His living is transcendent. He feels that every day he is in the clouds, and everything is under his feet. No temptation or problem can snare him, and everything has fallen off of him. He is a person who is fully released and liberated in the Lord.

After attaining to this condition [of the initial stage], almost every seeker of the Lord treasures this feeling and is trapped in this experience. Because we are living creatures with emotions, there is a personal love between us and the Lord. In addition, a spiritual person must be affectionate,

zealous, and full of feelings. A cold person can never be spiritual. The relationship between us and the Lord requires love, but problems between us and the Lord also come because of emotions. When people are cold toward the Lord and remain indifferent in their heart, it is impossible for them to have an experience of the Lord's life. However, some people have excessive feelings concerning the Lord. They are trapped in their own feelings and cannot easily come out. When they fellowship with the Lord and consider His loveliness, they are easily touched by Him and shed tears. On the one hand, this is a good condition, but on the other hand, they can easily fall into a trap. If a person is reluctant to leave the experience of these feelings, he will fall into a self-centered condition. He will consider it good enough simply to remain in the Lord, enjoy His rest and sweetness, and be satisfied by Him. However, this is a very superficial experience, because the Lord can never be satisfied by this. Therefore, just when the seeker feels that he is full of the Lord's presence, the Lord's presence suddenly disappears. At this time many people are dismayed and suppose that they have sinned, have gone back to the world, or do not love the Lord as much as before. However, as they calm themselves to inquire before the Lord, they discover that inwardly they love Him even more desperately and loathe sins and the world even more. Nevertheless, they feel they have lost the Lord's presence. On the one hand, they feel dry and weighed down, find Bible reading tasteless, receive no inspiration in prayer, and face difficulties and heavy burdens everywhere. On the other hand, they cannot stop their spiritual activities, even though they have no strength to go on, because they do not want to backslide. They believe that the Lord dwells in them, yet they do not sense His presence. This is a stage that all seekers of the Lord pass through in the process of their spiritual experience. – (The Nature and Building Up of the Church, Living Stream Ministry)