

The Heartbeat of God

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

I have never known a time when so many people are crying out from their souls, wanting to talk to someone, wanting somebody to love them, wanting somebody to share with them, wanting somebody to listen to them. And oh, there's such a need for us to give up our self-life and to enter into the heartbeat of God's life by sharing His life with them. At the expense of our own priorities, at the expense of our own time, at the expense of our own success, we must go to the Cross and discover the heartbeat of Jesus Christ.

I think of those who go out to the nursing homes, visiting the elderly who may be sick and tired, just plain worn out, or in some cases senile. But because of love, there are people who take the time and go into these nursing homes week after week. What a ministry. They have the heartbeat of God.

Every time they go, angels are recording such

visits, and Jesus is saying, “Inasmuch as you did it to the least of one of these, you’re doing it unto Me.” God is keeping the record books. Now, we don’t do these things for that reason, but we serve because of love. We do what we do because we have the heartbeat of Jesus Christ.

More and more, as you will understand in reading this booklet, I am beginning to realize that the time is so short. And the only thing to do is to let the love of God—the very heartbeat of God—be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

After reading these words, may you say with me, “Lord, by the Cross that You bore for my sins, I want to enter in to Your heartbeat.”

Chapter One

SWEET REMEMBRANCES

“Anew commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).

The heartbeat of God is such a great theme to consider. John the apostle, “the one whom Jesus loved,” was always so close to Jesus’ heart. At the Last Supper, as he was leaning on Him (John 13:23), John could actually feel Jesus’ heart beating. But more than that, he understood what the heart of Jesus expressed. The letters of John are full of the love of God.

The apostle Paul also understood the heart of God. Notice how Romans 16:3-4 reveals his heartbeat:

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

“Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”

Then he gives a long list of people he wanted to honor. In verse 16 he wrote, “Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.” He spent an entire chapter saluting different saints for what they were doing. Paul had the heartbeat of Christ.

I love Philippians 1:3. As the Spirit of God moves, this is a very beautiful verse to my heart:

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.”

Isn't that beautiful? Of all the remembrances that he had, Paul said, “I thank my God for every remembrance of you.” I like the fact that he said “every remembrance.”

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, speaking of gifts God has given in the Body of Christ, after prophets and teachers he mentions the gift of “helps.” God recognizes and highly esteems every individual he has placed in the Body, whether they are noticed by men or not.

These scriptures are most revealing. They reveal who has God's heartbeat and who just talks about it. A number of people have it. A number of people talk about it but don't live in it.

This message came to me as I thought of the number of people who do not fulfill their purpose. They are just going through the motions, living for their education, living for their home, living for their selfish reasons.

Thank God for Faithful Friends

One evening back in Maine, while waiting for people to arrive at church, I sat in my car and observed, and I had time to think. I thought about the Lord Jesus, His church, and our ministry.

My first thoughts went to a lot of people, the entire corporate Body, with love and thanksgiving to God. And then my thoughts went to individuals. I thought of Fred Lowell who put in so much time on that church building. Anything that you ever gave him to do, he was the first, and the last, and always in between.

So I thanked God quietly in the car for him, and I said, "Lord, I just thank You that we have an opportunity to know Fred, to fellowship with him, to work with him, and to see that kind of dedication, which I think is a very real example of a Spirit-filled Christian life in every practical way that a man could possibly live on earth."

Fred didn't have the greatest gift of commu-

nication on house-to-house visitation, but he surely went out and always gave it all he had with every single opportunity. He never missed unless he had to work.

There was something about him. He was unique, different. He possessed something that seemed to say, "If there's a job to do, I don't want any of the glory. I'll just go out and do it. While everybody else is talking about it, I'll go out and get the job done."

That was Fred Lowell.

I'm mentioning his name because God brought his name to my heart. And as I remembered the old church building, from a side view, with all the memories that went into my mind, that was one that impressed me deeply. And I said, "Lord Jesus, thank You for the remembrance of Fred Lowell."

Folks Who Live Only for Others

Well, on and on it could go. I thanked God for the elders who have stood with us through thick and thin. In every kind of victory and every kind of problem, they have never been anything but wonderful and spiritual and beautiful men of God you can be proud of in Jesus Christ.

And so I said, “I thank God for the remembrance of them, for the deacons, for their wives, for the officers, for the choir, and for all the servants of God.” I just started thanking God for them by name. For the remembrance of every single one of them, I just thanked God.

Then my mind went to Framingham, Massachusetts and other local churches. I still rejoice over the fantastic Body of Jesus Christ that God raised up in those places. I thought of the tremendous dedication of people who love God deeply. Whenever there was a need, they had the confidence to do anything because they served God with their whole heart. Their love for God’s Word went beyond fellowship. True fellowship is not as some people think of it. It is a spiritual exercise of love toward God and toward the Word, having a deep spiritual union with Jesus Christ and with those that love Him.

I thank God for every remembrance of them.

One by one, people from different places come to my mind—people from all over America, Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, and even Australia. My heart is flooded with joy and tears as I could honestly say with Paul, “I thank God for every remembrance of you.”

When the corporate Body begins to grow

and begins to know Jesus Christ as Lord, there is not a thing upon the earth that can remotely compare with the beauty and magnitude of our fellowship, which is based upon the love of God.

I recall one couple that always wanted everyone who visited the church to stay at their house for dinner. You could send fifteen to their house on a Saturday night or Sunday and there would never be anything but absolute rejoicing. I thank God for every remembrance of them.

Acertain fellow and his wife had many children, and not much else. But they were always available if there was ever a need.

“If someone needs a place to stay, they can have our food and our bedrooms. If there’s a family here that wants to go to dinner or doesn’t have a place to go to dinner, they can come home with us.”

It wasn’t the fact that he said it. It was what was behind what he said that blessed me. He had a heart that was always willing to do whatever it takes—a heart that doesn’t just do something for duty’s sake but for love’s sake.

If I knew of three families that needed a place to stay, I could call this family up at two o’clock tomorrow morning, and I would receive nothing but an absolute “yes” with no condi-

tions set forth and nothing but love responding. If they had to sleep on the floor themselves, they'd do it gladly, without a second thought or a single regret.

I thank God for every remembrance of those people. They did more than just talk about it. They always expressed the very heartbeat of God.

Chapter Two

JESUS WAS ALWAYS MOVED WITH COMPASSION

In Romans 16, Paul sent personal greetings to many individuals by name: to Priscilla and Aquila who laid down their own necks for him. Before that, he mentioned, Phebe. “She’s a faithful servant of the church, and whatever her business is in the Lord, you be sure to help her in her business.” Some people have tried to say that Paul was not favorable toward women, but Paul was not a woman hater. Besides mentioning Priscilla and a few others, he thought Phebe was all right, and he thought the church ought to cooperate with what she wanted to do with the Lord. He didn’t think she ought to sit down and do nothing. He knew Priscilla was a special gem in the corporate Body.

After honoring and saluting all of his fellow servants in Romans 16, Paul wasn’t insecure. He wasn’t fearful. He wasn’t always thinking in the

suspicious realm. He said, "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

For us, it is a handshake, which is acceptable in our age. But Paul wasn't living in insecurity. There was emotion in his love. There was feeling in the expression of it. There was the heartbeat of Christ involved in the relationship. It wasn't cold, passive, or indifferent. Rather, it was sweet, beautiful, thoughtful, and heart-warming.

That is the way Christianity ought to be. It ought to beat with the heartbeat of the Lord Jesus.

Think of the Lord Jesus on the Cross, and of what He said. Before He ever said, "I thirst," He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Before thinking of Himself, before He ever said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," He looked down at His mother, Mary, and said, "Woman, behold. There is your son—John. He will take care of you" (see John 19:26-27).

Before He ever said anything about "Why hast thou forsaken me?", He poured out His heart and poured out His love for everyone around Him. In the Garden of Gethsemane, in the beauty of that love, in the royalty of His own

dignity, in the majesty of His own divinity, the Lord Jesus Christ prayed and prayed. But before He ever prayed for Himself, He put the interest and concern of others first.

That is the heartbeat of Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 14:14, He had compassion on the multitudes and was moved to feed them. Again, in Matthew 15:32, He was moved with compassion. In Luke 19:41, again moved with compassion, He wept over Jerusalem. In John 11:35, He wept at Lazarus' grave. Again, He was moved with compassion. In Matthew 23:37, He wept a second time over the city, and again He was moved with compassion. He said, "How many times I would have gathered you unto Me, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not." Again and again, He was moved with compassion.

The heartbeat of Jesus Christ caused Him to come to earth with this mindset: "I identify Myself with sinful men, and I will take their sins on My body, to suffer as a guilty murderer, a liar, a sinner, and an adulterer. I will suffer and pay the price for their sins because I love them. I'll give Myself for the world. They have done nothing to deserve it, but I will give Myself for the world because I love them and I want to help them."

He did shed His blood for the world, always considering the world ahead of His fellowship with the Father. His heavenly fellowship with God the Father and all the angels came after He considered the need of the world. He wanted to lay down His life because He loved people. He just loved people.

Jesus Loved the Little Ones and the Weak Ones

In Mark 10:13, the people brought their children to Jesus. He loved the little children and He picked them up and held them in His arms, but the disciples rebuked the parents and said, in so many words, "He's tired. He's weary. Don't bother Him." But immediately, in spite of the exhaustion of His terrible schedule because He walked so many miles during a day, He said to His disciples, "Don't do that. Let these children come unto Me, for such is the Kingdom of God."

The heartbeat of God would not turn away a child. When that child wanted to be in the arms of Jesus, He would always let the child come into His arms.

In Luke 7:38-50, when the woman came to Simon the Pharisee's home and began to wash Jesus' feet with her tears and wipe His feet with her hair, Simon thought to himself, "She is a

common sinner, and if Jesus were a prophet, He would discern it and would rebuke her." But the heartbeat of Jesus Christ was not to condemn her. His heartbeat was to forgive her, to lift her up, to save her, to make a lady out of her. He wanted to help her become something other than a woman of the street. His heartbeat was to help her become a woman of God, and so He did.

Before she left that house, Jesus repudiated the condemnation of Simon and looked at this woman as if she were a queen. And He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

That is the very heartbeat of Christ.

When a religious and intellectual Pharisee named Nicodemus came to see Him, the heartbeat of Jesus did not turn him away. He was concerned for Nicodemus, who was also a teacher and who expressed a desire to know Him. Jesus wasn't about to condemn this Pharisee who was against Him because of ignorance. Nicodemus was born-again because he received the Savior. The heartbeat of Christ wanted to save this intellectual religious man who was simply on the wrong track, and He did.

Jesus, the Friend of Sinners

In Luke 19, when Zacchaeus was up in the tree, he was just a crooked publican, a tax collector. The streets were crowded, so he got up in the tree to get a look at what was going on. Well, the Lord Jesus Christ was not about to just go by when somebody was interested—somebody guilty, someone burdened down with sin, somebody who was trying to find out what He was like.

So Jesus stopped, and the multitude stopped. He looked up, and He said, “Zacchaeus, hurry up and come down.” Shocked, surprised, and astonished, Zacchaeus was told to come down by the Master who was seeking a little man in a little tree. And the Master said, “I want to go to your house to eat.”

Jesus wasn't supposed to do that. He wasn't supposed to eat with a sinner—a cheap person who was renounced by the social strata of His day. But Jesus went on house-to-house visitation and had dinner with a crook.

When Jesus got to the house, He looked into the eyes of that crook and He said, “Do you know that salvation has come to your house today?” The revelation of the Master in his pres-

ence began to flood Zacchaeus with grace and mercy and he knew that he was saved, because Jesus Christ had a heartbeat for crooked publicans.

Then, there was the woman caught in the very act of adultery (John 8). She felt so guilty and condemned. The Pharisees caught her in the act and brought her to Jesus. Oh, how easy it would have been to be angry. How easy it would have been to say, "Stone her. She's filthy. She's unclean." How easy it would have been to embarrass her with a sarcastic remark.

That would have been easy for One who was so holy, so perfect, so just—for the Master who never did sin, who never could touch sin, who could not even look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13). He couldn't behold sin; He hated it (Isaiah 43, Psalm 45:7). But the Master did not reject her, because He had a heartbeat, and that heartbeat said, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

The heartbeat of Christ was not to condemn but to forgive, because in John 3:17, He came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. The heartbeat of Jesus was to save her. The heartbeat of Jesus was to forgive her. And the heartbeat of

Jesus was to deliver her from the terrible, sarcastic, embarrassing tactics of her accusers. The heartbeat of Jesus was to set her free.

Chapter Three

PEOPLE JUST NEED TO BE LOVED WITH GOD'S LOVE

“For the Love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

I am convinced that when the heartbeat of God is moving in us, the constraint of love will enable all the beauty of the vision of God to motivate us to get the message out to a lost world. Our message will go out to help those who are weak and suffering, those who are hungry and starving, and those who are lonely and suffering from guilt and condemnation and all the terrible results of sin in a mixed-up world system. I'm convinced that when we have the heartbeat of God, we will have that vision.

I remember hearing a missionary to Calcutta, India, saying, "Of all the suffering in the world of pain and starvation and leprosy, there is something worse. People who are not loved—they are in the worst state."

She said, "I've seen all the privation and starvation and poverty and all the sickness and all the terrible things that disease and sickness can do. But one thing is worse: that is, somebody who has no one to love them."

When you have the heartbeat of Christ, you have a way of knowing who those people are. You have a way of being led to them. You have a way of knowing what to say. You have a way of being the revelation of Jesus Christ in the person of your humanity, with the very cause of His own divinity manifesting and effectively working out His compassion toward them. You have a way of being the one available to the Lord Jesus to find those who have no one to love them.

We don't need more money and we do not need bigger and better churches. We do not need better teachers. We do not need better books. We do not need more entertainment. We do not need more services. But we do need the heartbeat of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Suffered Because of Love

When the Lord Jesus was suffering on the Cross, the Just for the unjust, and said, "Father, forgive them," all I can think of is this:

There was One who loved beyond sin.

There was One who loved beyond failure.

There was One who loved beyond pain.

There was One who loved beyond duty.

There was One who loved because of love.

And how can you explain it?

It's the heartbeat of Jesus Christ.

The greatest moments of my life as a Christian have to do with the way God is helping me to grow into the heartbeat of Christ. The greatest moments for some of you have to do with growing into the reality and the truth of His heartbeat. I have watched many beautiful people let the Word of God so touch them that they begin to understand God's heartbeat.

We do not have a lot of time left. Young married couples should be touched by the Word of God. Some of you who put other things ahead of the Word of God should let Him touch you. Some of you that have become cold, you should rush to the altar to get warm and to stay on fire through the Holy Spirit with the heartbeat of

Jesus.

Let Christ Live Through You

The way to discover Christ is to discover the needs of people. Once you have found Him as your Savior, once you have received Him and He is living inside of you, once you trust Him and read His Word and pray and fellowship with Him, you begin to have His heartbeat. Then, the way to discover Christ in reality is to give what you've got—which is Christ in you—to others.

That is the way to discover Christ.

When they had presumed against him, Job prayed for his friends (Job 42:10), and God gave him twice as much as he had before his trials. He discovered something by praying for others.

In the seventh chapter of Acts, when Stephen was being stoned to death for preaching the Gospel, he looked up into heaven and saw the glory of God. He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father. Then he said, "Father, lay not this sin to their charge." Stephen definitely had the heartbeat of God.

Once you have received Him as your own through salvation and once you begin to study His Word, the way to discover Christ is to be

concerned for others.

The way to experience Christ is to experience His vision. The way to discover Christ is to enter into His very compassion, to enter into His very purpose for coming. Learn to seek the lost and love the weak and help the sick. The way to discover reality is to enter into reality. The way to discover life is to enter into His life for others to share it and to lay it down. Lay it down so that it's a matter of giving Christ's life out through the death of the Cross in your old life, so you can discover the reality that is the life-giving, beautiful compassion of His life.

I do not know how much longer we'll be here on earth. In everything we do, we have the privilege of having the heartbeat of God. Every type of person in our congregation can have it. You do not need an above average intellect to have it. You cannot buy it with money. You do not have to be popular to have it. You do not have to dress well to have it. We can have God's heartbeat when we come to the Lord Jesus and receive it, moment by moment, through the Cross, through the Word, seeing the needs of other people.

CONCLUSION

Oh, the heartbeat of God in the ministry of compassion! May we have the heartbeat of God that is willing to share Him in the various possibilities of life. Oh, that God would raise up not just a handful, but that God would raise up men and women and teenagers and young people who would burn with God's heartbeat, believers who would be constrained by love, believers who would be dedicated to the task of the Great Commission, in its balance and in its completeness.

Oh, for Christians who would pray, *Lord Jesus, here I am. I have Your heartbeat. I will go. The insignificant job, I'll help in doing. I want to be a helper, and I'll lay down my life for the Body and for the leaders. Lord, I'm available. I've got Your heartbeat. It's the only reason I'm here.*

The only reason I'm here, Lord Jesus, is for Your heart to beat in me, for Your compassion to be ministered to and through me. The only reason I am here

is to be an instrument of Your love, a method of Your manifestation, a vehicle of Your righteousness. The only reason I am here is to be a home for Your indwelling Spirit, to be the light bulb for Your indwelling power. The only reason I'm here, Lord Jesus, is simply to manifest who You are.

Lord Jesus, may Your heart beat through me today. In Your precious name, Amen.