

“His Name is Jealous” (Ex 34:14)

We are together taking a journey of series “Being Set Free.” Today, our theme is “His Name is Jealous.” We will look at jealousy.

Basic need for human beings are water, food and shelter from cold. But we need more than just basic need. We seek comfort. We want coffee, and it must be good coffee. We want not just rice, but we want meat and fish as well, and it must be fresh. And if we can have chocolate, cakes and ice cream, that is even better. We need not only roof to shelter us from rain, but also need walls and windows must shut properly so that insects can't enter. And of course we want to have air-conditioners.

We need not only material need, but also fellowship with others, in which we feel joy and happiness. If we don't have that, no matter how much material possessions we have, we will never be satisfied.

But there is a limit on things in this world. This universe is not a fair place. Some people have a lot, and others have little. Then two emotions arise. Jealousy and envy.

In his book “The Cry of the Soul,” Dr. Tremper Longman says; “Jealousy is a desire to protect our beloved possession from alien suitors. Envy is a desire to acquire or repossess the jewel of our eye.”¹

In short, when our hearts are turned to God, Envy leads us to discover that God is my portion. And, Jealousy points to a truth “I am His.”

Last time we looked at envy, and today we will look at jealousy.

1. A Jealous God

In the Old Testament, there is one Hebrew word means jealousy. It also means to envy, be jealous, be envious, be zealous.² There is another word. It is a special word, only used for God's jealousy (cf. Ex 20:5; 34:14; Duet 4:24; 5:9; 6:14).³

Moses came to Mount Horeb, there he heard from God. “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. I have seen the misery of my people Israel, and I have heard their cry. I am sending you

¹ Dan Allender and Tremper Longman, “The Cry of the Soul,” Navpress, 1994, p.95

² <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/qana.html>

³ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/qanna.html>

to Pharaoh. Bring my people Israelite out of Egypt.” He asked God, “What is your name?” God answered, “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3:14). And later, this God reveals his own name clearly, and that name is Jealous (Ex 34:14).

Here is the context.

Israel was slaves in Egypt. God set them free by his mighty hand, just as He spoke to Moses. After that, God gave Moses Ten Commandments, the Law and the pattern for the Tabernacle. The ten commandments are engraved on tablets and given to Moses.

When Moses came down from the mountain, he found people had made a golden calf and they were worshipping it. Moses saw it, his anger burned and he threw the tablets, breaking them into pieces.

After this, Moses came before the Lord and interceded for the people. The Lord told Moses to bring two stone tablets like the first ones, and come before Him.

Early in the next morning, Moses went up Mount Sinai, the Lord’s mountain. There the Lord revealed Himself before Moses. The Lord, whose name is Jealous.

Of what is God jealous?

“He is jealous of idols, whose worship seduced [tempted] Israel. God desires to protect His people when they cozy up to foreign gods.”⁴

Israel is God’s people. God saved them from slavery by His hand. He redeemed them. He bought them back. They are the people who belong to God. God is jealous when his people devote themselves to other things, other person, other gods. God cannot allow them to do that. He is angry when he sees that.

“His jealousy is as much as a part of His nature as His love, compassion, and mercy.”⁵

God will not overlook His people having any other gods except Him, nor should a husband or wife let any romantic or sexual partners to their marriage relationship. Neither should God and as well as a spouse accept the worship of false gods such as money, career, power, and position. And all objects of addiction, whether alcohol, food, pornography, work, or perfectionism, which set up idolatrous worship of a false god.⁶

⁴ Ibid., p.103

⁵ Ibid., p.104

⁶ Ibid., p.106

2. Love between a husband and a wife to illustrate his jealousy

God uses the love between a husband and a wife to illustrate his jealousy for his people.

For example, Jeremiah 3:20, “But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you, Israel, have been unfaithful to me.”

The divine-human and the husband-wife relationship are the only two absolutely exclusive relationships.⁷ Because marriage is a mutual commitment to share life with a level of intimacy that is only possible between two people, a man and a woman, not three or four or more.⁸

“Jealousy is a legitimate emotion that God has given us in order to guard the important marriage relationship and keep the family intact. The love shared by a married couple is qualitatively different than any other kind of love in its exclusivity.”⁹

Jealousy is an indicator that a greater love exists for a false partner than for you. A false partner is not only a person, but it can be things, such as money, career, power, and position, and all objects of addiction: alcohol, food, pornography, work, or perfectionism.

“But there is a difference between divine and human jealousy, and we must never lose sight of it. God has the right to possess and protect. We do not possess our spouse, but we do have the privilege of protection.”¹⁰

When a marriage is losing healthy jealousy, depth and passion for each other are going to disappear. When a marriage contains unhealthy jealousy, trust and passion will be destroyed.¹¹

Unhealthy jealousy so often leads us into self-protection and pettiness. Many people would just as soon deeply hurt the emotion.¹²

⁷ Ibid., p.105-106

⁸ Ibid., p.107

⁹ Ibid., p.106

¹⁰ Ibid., p.107

¹¹ Ibid., p.109-110

¹² Ibid., p.109

In short, jealousy can be redemptive which reflects God's own character as a God who protects His loved ones. And it can be destructive.¹³

3. God's jealousy is our shield

Christmas. That is the season to remember that Jesus, the Most High God, came to us, to save us. He is our salvation, the promised Messiah, Christ. Why do we need salvation? Why do we need the Savior? That is because we are sinners.

Everyone who sins is a slave to sin (John 8:34). Slaves are governed by their master. Sinners are governed by their sin. God cannot stand when we love someone else or something else more than Him. He cannot leave us to serve something else or someone else than Himself. He cannot stand when we worship something else or someone else. He cannot overlook if we are possessed by something else or someone else. Because God loves us. God is a Jealous God.

God created heaven and earth and the whole universe. He possesses everything, and he rules everything. Our lives are not ours actually, it's given by God. God created humans, and God breathed into us his breath, and we became a living being. We belonged to God.

We were created by God in his image. He made us as objects of His love. God of Trinity created us, human beings so that we will be added to his perfect fellowship of love. However, that relationship was lost because of our sin. We cannot do anything about it. And not only that, as He is a jealous God, and his love for us is so great that when we love other things, we became objects of His wrath.

But by the cross of Christ, we were redeemed. Now we became His again (1 Cor 6:20).

Christmas. Jesus came to us. He came to us to take us back, to recover the first love. Because he is Jealous.

How did he come? He came to release the captives caught by the enemy. So did he come as Lord of hosts with the army of his angels? No. He came as a powerless, little baby. Then, was he born in a palace as a child of a king? No. He was born as a child of a poor couple. They went back to their hometown, but no

¹³ Ibid., p.108

one let them stay in their houses, and there was no room for them in the inn either. They didn't even have a bed to lay their new born baby in. So he was laid in a manger, on the straw.

The Most High God reveals himself through the vulnerability of an infant.¹⁴ Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

As Christians, we know what is right and what is sin. We know the Ten commandments. We know we are supposed to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. But we can't. I can't. Sometimes I can and I rejoice in it, but the next moment I fail. We feel down and blame ourselves and depressed. God says, "Be joyful always." We want to do that. I do want to do that. But various feelings like anger, dissatisfaction, fear, despair, pride, envy and shame prevent us from doing it.

We need God. We need Christ. We need Savior. We know that. But sometimes all I can do is to pray in a whisper from a distance, "Please have mercy on me a sinner."

God doesn't want you to be far from Him. He wants you to come close to Him, so close that He can touch you, hear your heartbeat, and wipe away your tears. Because he loves you so much.

What did God do? He came as a helpless baby. Family members rejoice when a baby is born. The baby cannot do anything. He is just there. But he is a great joy to the family. The baby Jesus indicates how God the Father looks at you. You are His child. He loves you so much. He loves you not because you can do something. His greatest joy is that you are with Him. No matter what mistakes you make or how many times you fail, God's love for you will never change.

God's jealousy is our shield; it is our promise of eternal protection and passionate exclusivity. God is saying that you are mine, nothing can threaten this relationship. It is our confidence that the divine Lover will win His bride.¹⁵

His name is Jealousy. He wants to recover you from what is captivating you. He wants to restore loving relationship with you. He will do anything to restore that. He doesn't mind giving up all glories in heaven, his greatness and power as God, and even becoming a helpless little baby.

¹⁴ Brennan Manning, "Lion and Lamb," Chosen Books, 1986, p.139

¹⁵ Dan and Tremper, p.112

In order to come to God, to remain in his love, you don't need anything, you don't have to do anything. All you need to do is to be embraced by God's loving hands, like a little baby rests in his mother's arms.

4. Jealousy points to a truth

What should we do when we feel jealousy? We should pause for a while, and ask ourselves, "What am I really thirsty for? What is the emptiness in my heart?" Ponder for a while. You may ask yourself. What kind of pattern do I have when I feel jealousy? In what kind of situations do I feel jealousy? How have I been dealing with jealousy so far? How have I been filling the emptiness in my heart so far?

Jealousy points to a truth within us. That is, we desire to be loved, accepted, understood, and embraced by our beloved, and this union must not be threatened by anyone else, but remains forever. Those things are fundamental needs for human being.

We are deeply hanger for that. We always seek for that. Because we are human beings. But as we live in a sinful world, this our deep desire never be satisfied. Sometimes we were treated carelessly, badly, and sometimes we treat others insensitively, oppressively.

Life ends as life was lived, unless there comes the intervening grace of God to heal, restore and redeem the negatives of our past days.¹⁶

Through experiences in which our personality had been damaged, especially in our childhood, and we started to believe our false image. Until when we are healed, we will continue to relate to other people based on what we learned. Unless we recover from the damage, our relationship will be kept under its influence.

When our hearts are turned to God, Jealousy points to a truth "I am His." By knowing this truth "I am His", our fundamental needs will be satisfied.

Our God is Emmanuel, God with us. His name is Jealous.

¹⁶ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (Book)*, Zondervan, 2006, p.85

For Lifenet groups and personal reflection

- 1) God's name is Jealousy. How does this truth stretch or challenge your understanding of God?
- 2) God's jealousy is our shield. Why and how? What does it mean for you?
- 3) - What kind of pattern do you have when you feel jealousy?
 - In what kind of situations do you feel jealousy?
 - How have you been dealing with jealousy so far?
 - How have you been filling the emptiness in your heart so far?
- 4) "I am His." If this is true (and it is actually true), what would you change in your daily life? You might think about your schedule, relationship, habit, priority or future plan, or what you value, etc.