

Ephesians 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- The path to fullness runs squarely through the love of God. We cannot be who we're meant to be outside of the revelation of His love. Because who we're meant to be is the other half of that love.

## I. God's Love Cares Deeply

### 1. A High Priest Who Sympathizes

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.

- He became like us in every way so that He could fully sympathize with us. He bore our sorrows

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected by men,  
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.  
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;  
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.  
4 Surely He has borne our griefs  
And carried our sorrows;  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God, and afflicted.

### 2. He has compassion

Ps 145:8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and rich in love.

9 The LORD is good to all;  
he has compassion on all he has made.

- It's His motivation in teaching

Mark 6:34

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

- It's His motivation in healing

Matthew 14:14

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

- It's His motivation in provision, in miraculous signs

Matthew 15:32

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

- It's His motivation in forgiveness

Matthew 18:27

Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

- **It's His motivation in calling us and empowering us**

Matthew 9:35-10:8

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the good news of the kingdom and **healing** every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion on them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness... 5 These twelve Jesus sent out ... 7 As you go, **preach** this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 **Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.** Freely you have received, freely give.

### 3. He knows our frame (weakness)

Ps 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,

Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

9 He will not always strive with us,

Nor will He keep His anger forever.

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,

Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,

So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

12 As far as the east is from the west,

So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

13 As a father pities his children,

So the LORD pities those who fear Him.

14 For He knows our frame;

He remembers that we are dust.

### 4. He knows our works (struggles/striving for greatness)

#### 1. The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 6:3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father **who sees in secret** will Himself reward you openly.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

#### 2. The Churches of Revelation

Revelation 2:1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

'These things says **He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:** 2 "**I know** your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil.

8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 “**I know** your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and **I know** the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan.

12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 “**I know** your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19 “**I know** your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first.

Revelation 3:1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,

‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “**I know** your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “*He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens*”: 8 “**I know** your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 “**I know** your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

- He walks among the lampstands (the church according to Rev 1:20). He is not distant or far away. He sees and He knows – our labor, our love, our trials, our circumstances.

4. He knows our needs

Matthew 6:8 For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

5. Jesus wept

John 11:1 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

4 When Jesus heard *that*, He said, “**This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**”

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was...

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.” ...

20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house...

28 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” 29 **As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him.**

30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. 31 Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.”

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

33 Therefore, **when Jesus saw her weeping**, and the Jews who came with her weeping, **He groaned in the spirit and was troubled**. 34 And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

35 **Jesus wept**. 36 Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

37 And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

The Call – The exchange of hearts

1. Cast your cares upon Him

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

2. Take His cares upon you

Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

III. Why? Because He invites us to. He invites us to be His friends, His partner, people after His own heart who desire what He desires

1. He calls us His friends

- There's more available than just direction in what we do. He is Lord and we are His servants and whatever He says to do, we do it. But He calls us more than servants – He calls us friends.

John 15:15

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

- A servant obeys blindly, knowing only what he's been told to do, not knowing or caring why. As friends, we still do whatever He asks. But we do it with understanding. We do it knowing why He wants it done. And we do it because we share that desire, not just out of obedience.

2. He calls us to desire what He desires

Romans 8:5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but **those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires**.

3. He offers to reveal to us what He desires

2 Cor 1:9 But as it is written:

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*

*Nor have entered into the heart of man*

*The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

10 But **God has revealed them to us through His Spirit**. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, **the deep things of God**. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

IV. Why? Because it is the nature of love

1. He first loved us

2. Perfect relationship – I carry your burdens, you carry mine

1. We could each carry our own, but then there's no relationship

V. Why? Because we desperately need this exchange of hearts

1. We are desperately in need of not only the right doctrine and the right practices, but the right heart

1 Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have

become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing...

8 Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

- There is something about the human heart that is eternal. One day all wrong doctrine will vanish – we will see fully. All wrong behavior will vanish – there will no longer be any temptation. Our hearts will remain – what condition will they be in?
- God is searching for a people after His own heart (1 Sam 13:14)

## 2. Hearing His heart

Matthew 16:21-23

21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."

23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; **for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.**"

Mark 14:3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor."

And they criticized her sharply.

6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

- Both hear the same words – I am going to die.
- Peter heard His words and responds according to the interests of man.
- Mary heard His heart and responds with exactly the kind of response He was looking for. She understood not just that He was going to die, but why. She understood that He was dying for the sake of love. And so she responded in love.
- Peter's response is rebuked. Mary's is forever memorialized as a part of the gospel message that Jesus says should never be left out.

## 3. The prophet Hosea – right words aren't enough

1. Hosea was sent to call God's beloved people Israel a harlot and a prostitute.

2. He could have spoken the words exactly right and yet totally missed the message God was trying to convey.

3. God wouldn't allow this to happen. Before He would allow Hosea to deliver the

message, He required that Hosea understand the heart behind it.

4. Hosea is told to marry a prostitute, fall in love with her, have children with her and then buy her back when she betrays him to return to prostitution. Only then can Hosea understand the heart of God as He mourns over Israel's harlotry and calls to her to return to Him, promising that He will pay whatever it costs to gain her back

## VI. How?

### 1. Seeking His heart

- The only way we can be a people (following) after God's own heart is to be a people (seeking) after God's own heart

Psalm 27:4 One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,

That will I seek:

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD

All the days of my life,

To behold the beauty of the LORD,

And to inquire in His temple.

### 2. Time in the Word

Deut 29:29 "The secret *things* belong to the LORD our God, but those *things which are* revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

- There are many secrets of God's heart that we do not know. But there is an incredible amount that we do know from what He has revealed in His Word.
- We must be faithful with what has been revealed if we want to know the secret things.
- The Word, more than a collection of information, is a message from a Person and reveals to us the heart of that Person if we look for it.

### 3. Time in prayer

Matthew 9:35-10:8

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the good news of the kingdom and **healing** every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion on them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness... 5 These twelve Jesus sent out ... 7 As you go, **preach** this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 **Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.** Freely you have received, freely give.

- Instruction prepared their minds
- Anointing prepared their hands
- Prayer prepared their hearts
- Though God knows what we need before we ask, He still demands that we ask. Prayer is the great wisdom of God in that our hearts are prepared for the receiving in the asking. Prayer requires that we come to know God and to know His desires.

1 John 5:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Jeremiah 9:23 Thus says the LORD:

“ Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom,  
Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might,  
Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;  
24 But let him who glories glory in this,  
That he understands and knows Me,  
That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.  
For in these I delight,” says the LORD.

- There is more power in knowing who God is and exercising that through prayer than in all the strength and wisdom and riches of man.

John 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. 12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it

- The revelation of God in Jesus Christ empowers us in prayer, which empowers us in life.
- Treasuring what we receive. With the privilege of knowing God's heart comes the responsibility of stewarding God's emotions.

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” 23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

Proverbs 2:1 My son, if you receive my words,  
And treasure my commands within you,  
2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,  
And apply your heart to understanding;  
3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,  
And lift up your voice for understanding,  
4 If you seek her as silver,  
And search for her as *for* hidden treasures;  
5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,  
And find the knowledge of God.  
6 For the LORD gives wisdom;  
From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding;

Why seek the heart of God?

Because we can – we are invited into the depths of His heart

Because we want to – it is the nature of love

Because we need to – we cannot be truly transformed without transforming our hearts as well. We cannot transform our hearts without laying hold of His

Because He first loved us