

## A Jealous Spirit Lives in Us

By

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(Sabbath Sermon, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2017)

Key text:

*“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” (Jam. 4:5).*

If you want to see the power of jealousy in action, go witness the jealousy of a wife scorned or a husband cuckolded! The rage is terrible and the hurt deep. Some get into all sorts of tantrums, smashing the TV to the floor, throwing and smashing plates, getting hold of offensive objects and spewing expletives too vile to repeat here! It’s a nasty scene to behold!

Even for those who don’t express outbursts of anger, the pain and feeling of resentment and betrayal will smoulder for a long while. A jealousy wife/husband offended by their spouse is not easily appeased. His or her love has been despised, betrayed and taken for granted. They have been spat in the face!

Even if we humans can’t handle betrayal by a loved one, what about the Almighty Father who loved us so infinitely that He gave His only begotten Son as an atonement for our souls?

Yet with His Spirit living in us we do things to spite – pour scorn on -- the love relationship we have with Him, “for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” (Eph. 5:30).

In His reaction to our unfaithfulness – expressed by our love of the world – His fire of vengeance will only burn us in His jealousy. He will react in a furious, devastating manner – He will destroy us! We defiled His temple; we made light of it and desecrated it by our uncleanness!

He asks, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

The message is clear: A desecrated temple – the defiled body of a believer – will be destroyed. It is no longer fit for the dwelling of God having lost its defining characteristic of holiness and thus its reason for being. It’ll not be left standing; you will be pulled down!

The holy, righteous life we live is not only about us but *more importantly about God and the high esteem in which we hold His relationship with us*. We are His temple of flesh and blood, and He has taught us how to keep His temple holy.

So while, on one hand, He will destroy us because we failed to live up to expectation as a temple which is supposed to be holy, on the other hand, His anger is driven by pangs of jealousy towards a temple which He loves but which has betrayed His love.

He asks in anguish: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jam. 4:4).

### **The Holy One will not Share You with Another**

It’s either Him or the world. The Almighty God will not be part of a love triangle involving Himself, you and the world as He makes clear in the preceding scripture. It’s just not possible. Unless you are wholly devoted to Him, any attempt to befriend the world by obeying its voice and following its pleasures, even as you are supposedly married to Him spiritually, automatically makes you His enemy! You can’t be a friend of both God and the world. The moment love of the world enters the picture, you are looking at yourself in the mirror as the enemy of God! The love of the Father is not in you. Hence the warning:

*“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).*

It’s an either or situation. Love for the Father and love for the world are two different kinds of love that are antithetical to each other. Even the stimuli that stir either are not alike. God in His infinite holiness, goodness and glory is in no way comparable to the sleaze and evil pleasures of the world to make a true believer want to divide his affection between them. Any attempt to do so is therefore an indication that the love of the Father is not in a person. The love of the Father – His love for us and our love for Him – is so satisfying that if you still have any affection for the world, then the love of the Father is not really in you. You are just pretending to love Him! You are a hypocrite – an enemy pretender!

And He will treat you as such. His love will turn into hate. The ancient Israelites experienced this love of God turned into hatred firsthand in the wilderness on their way from Egypt – and we are on our way out of an Egypt-like world of sin:

*“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

*“But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore, He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them” (Isaiah 63:9-10).*

Earlier, He had warned them:

*“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:*

*“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;*

*“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments” (Ex. 20:4-6).*

Hate and love from “a jealous God” in the same breath! It all depends on your attitude towards Him. If you demonstrate love for Him by keeping His Commandments He will love you back, but if you show hatred for Him by disobeying His law, making for yourself gods of your own imagination to worship, He will punish you for your sins even to the fourth generation!

Mind you, gods of human imagination are not only carved in wood or made of stone. They are simply things that people put before God, that they revere more than God, that they prioritize and obey at the expense of obedience to God. The nature of the gods you worship – whether of tangible material or of the evil obsessions of the heart -- makes no difference to God. Once you worship them instead of the Creator God, you are an idolater.

Notice how YHWH charged Israel with the sin of idolatry in the days of the Prophet Ezekiel:

*“Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.  
“And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,  
“Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?  
“Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;  
“That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols” (Ezekiel 14:1-5).*

A heart which is not devoted to God in obedience is a “heart of unbelief” which leads us away from the living God (Heb. 3:12) to serve dumb dead gods! The end result is destruction as befell the disobedient Israelites (see 1 Cor. 10:4-12; Jude 1:5).

In conclusion, let’s stir the jealous feelings of the Most High to act in a positive way for our good by being obedient, not in a negative way by being disobedient.

Or He will spit us out! He can’t stand divided allegiance (any devious attempt to please two masters):

*“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the Faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:  
“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.  
“So because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth.  
“Because you say, I am rich and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,  
“I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich; and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.  
“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent” (Rev. 3:14-19 NASB).*

The Laodicean church had one overarching flaw: they were rich and well-off in the world but were cold at heart towards the Lord Jesus. They were to correct that spiritually stultifying

attitude by being zealous, being on fire for Him and changing their ways. “Be zealous and repent”.

Anything short of wholehearted devotion to our loving God is no love at all in His sight. It’s a betrayal of His love for us—which is a sin to be repented of. Otherwise, He will turn on us in His jealousy.

*10 “Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;*

*Take warning, O judges of the earth.*

*11 Worship the LORD with reverence*

*And rejoice with trembling.*

*12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,*

*For His wrath may soon be kindled.*

*How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” (Ps 2:10-12 NASU).*

*Amen!*