

Jealous for God's Glory

Pastor Marvin R. Barham

Last week we discussed how God is jealous for relationship with those He has covenant relationship with. We looked at how righteous jealousy differs than human jealousy or envy. We said that God is jealous for the honor of His name and the proclamation of that honor, as well as those who are rightfully His and who, in covenant with Him, should return the same faithful, single devoted love. We said that God expects us to be as jealous over Him and the fidelity of our love as He is over us. In this message, instead of looking at God's jealousy for us, we will take a deeper assessment of our jealousy for Him.

Throughout Scripture we have seen how God is jealous over us and will go to great lengths to demonstrate His love and the grace that He has towards us. We see through many of the prophets how God's people broke covenant with God and worshipped other gods, yet Yahweh made a way to redeem them unto Himself. However, we have also found where God does not respond favorably to our sinful infidelity. (**Deut. 29:20** *The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.*) We also pointed out that God's ability to express emotion does not demean or undermine His immutability. When God expresses emotion it is not anthropomorphic. So what more does God say about us being jealous for Him?

In **Deut. 32:21** God responds to Israel's breaking of covenant with Him: (**21** *They have **moved me to jealousy** with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will **move them to jealousy** with those which are not a people; I will provoke them **to anger with a foolish nation.***) Because of His jealousy over them and their lack of jealousy for Him, they provoke His anger and He allows them to become fleshly jealous over a people who are not a people of covenant, allowing sinful consequences to take its course of the law of sin and death.

Eric Thoennes states, "Godly human jealousy that has God's honor as its object represents the highest form of human jealousy. This emotion earnestly desires that God be recognized for who he is, and that he be responded to accordingly."¹ God is jealous for His honor and the proclamation thereof. If those who are His will not proclaim His honor, or be jealous for Him, He will respond by allowing us to be jealous for that we are jealous for and reap the fruit thereof. He will also find others in creation that will proclaim His honor. One of the best illustrations of the response of Father to the lack of jealousy for Him and His honor is found in Jesus' response to the Pharisees in **Luke 19:39-41** (**39***And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40**And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, **if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.** 41**And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,)*

To not respond to God is a response in and of itself. To not be jealous for God (that is – to not have a faithful, monogamous devotion and love for Him) is to deny who He is to your life. What does it mean for us to be jealous for God? Let's look at a few examples throughout Scripture. First we will look at Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest. Look with me in **Numbers 25:11** (**11***Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, **hath turned my wrath away** from the children of Israel, while **he was zealous for my sake** among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel **in my jealousy.***)

God's anger was provoked because of His jealousy over His people who had broken covenant with Him. Yet, God's heart is moved and His mercy and grace invoked because of one man who was

jealous for God. Phinehas pursued the heart of Father zealously even among those who did not. Phinehas **zealously** honored God and proclaimed His honor. So, here God illuminates, through the heart of Phinehas, an image of what it means to be jealous for God. It also reveals the heart and mercy of a Father God whose heart is moved by the jealousy of His people for Him. It is also a tremendous illustration of how God shows grace to an entire nation of people because of the heart of a few who were jealous for Him.

We see this again with young King David in **I Samuel 17:36** (**36***Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.*) David's aggressive motivation is not for his own honor, glory or personal gain. David's passion is stirred by the defamation of God's honor. David is jealous for God's sake, on God's behalf, for God's name, for God's glory and honor. His righteous jealousy for God's honor is provoked by the unrighteousness, by David's indignation against wickedness. He is jealous for the sake of the name of Jealousy, Justice, and Righteousness. What and Who he knows as God of all creation has been violated and David feels obligated to make a stand against the enemies of God. It is not that God cannot defend Himself, but because David is jealous for God. Where is this righteous indignation within God's people? Without this righteous **indignation** against unrighteousness, first in our own lives and second in the culture around us, we become a people of compromise of righteousness and thus a people who lack righteous jealousy for God. David expresses this righteous jealousy again in **Psalms 69:9-10** (**9***For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. 10**When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*) Again, we find David is jealous for the house of God; he says he is "eaten up" or consumed with the reproach of God's people and weeps on God's behalf. His heart is **broken** on God's behalf because of the sin of the people. He is so jealous for God's heart that his soul is **chastened** (corrected by pruning or suffering) and he is moved to a fast of **repentance**.

Next we find where Jesus expressed the same jealousy as David when He overthrew the merchant tables in the temple. (**Matthew 21:11-13** **11***And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. 12**And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13**And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*) Again, Thoennes states, "Jesus' disciples recognized the same attitude in Jesus as he overturned the temple merchant tables as that which was in David in Psalms 69 as they recalled, "jealousy for your house will **consume me**."¹ Jesus was not emotionally out of control and in a fit of fleshly rage. Jesus was responding with indignation to the dishonor of the house and name of God the Father. Jesus was demonstrating righteous jealousy on behalf of the Father, as did David, because the people had lost their jealousy for God and had allowed their love for Him to become distracted with idolatrous devotions to other things than God.

Let us look at another, the Prophet Elijah in **I Kings 19:14** (**14***And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*) Elijah confronts the people of God who have lost sight of His name, and he confronts the false prophets. He then flees the threats of Jezebel and cries out to God. In his cry to God he expresses his righteous jealousy for God. God then responds by revealing to Elijah that there were others in the land who also were jealous for Him. Elijah is both **humbled** and encouraged by righteous jealousy between he and God. God re-establishes his **confidence** in God's jealousy for His people.

Finally, we look at the apostle Paul and his jealousy for God as expressed in his jealousy over God's people in **2 Corinthians 11:2** (*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*) Paul expresses the heart of Father in righteous jealousy and gives us affirmation as the essence of righteous jealousy. He illustrates for us the intent of God's desire for His bride to be espoused to only Him in their love and devotion. Paul also expresses God's desire for His people to be a "chaste virgin"; that is to be a **pure** and **holy** people who will not love or lust for another, who will not be intimate with another in their devotion and worship. In Paul's expression of godly jealousy for God's people he illuminates God's persistence for the jealousy of His people for Him. "While God's jealousy is foundational for his wrath and indignation, it also motivates his relentless pursuit of his loved ones when they go astray."¹

God desires a people who are jealous for Him. As we look at the examples of righteous jealousy for God in Phinehas, David, Elijah, Jesus, and Paul we find that to be righteously jealous for God means to be:

1. Zealous for His honor
2. Indignant against sin
3. Broken in spirit
4. Chastened in our souls
5. Pure and Holy
6. Repentant
7. Prayerful
8. Consumed with Him
9. Humbled
10. Confident in God

Isaiah 29:13 *Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this **people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:***

God wants more than a ritually religious or legalistic people. He wants a people who draw near to Him from hearts that are jealous for Him. When we are not jealous for God, He is not the center of our lives. If He is not the center of our lives then something or someone else is, even if it is self. "When jealousy for God's glory is neglected, the creature rather than the creator takes center stage."¹ Let us draw near to Him jealously.

¹ Eric Thoennes, *Godly Jealousy*