**When My Love to Christ Grows Weak**

**Introduction**

1. Jesus made it clear as the Messiah that those who would have a relationship with Him and benefitted from His redemptive work, and victorious reign would be those who desire Him – **John 5:39-40; 6:44; 12:32**
   1. ***“[He] called us by His own glory and excellence.” (2 Peter 1:3, NASB)***
2. If we came to Jesus, it was because we were drawn to Him. He was someone we valued and grew to love because He first loved us.
3. When we came to Jesus, we saw the cross for what it was – what I deserved but He took – and so we forsook all and died with Him to live with Him in His resurrection.
4. Our new life with Christ was full of excited potential and new relationships with those who came to Him too. But the Bible warns about things which can threaten our fervent love for Him – temptations, difficulties, persecutions, trials, disappointment of others and ourselves, time, etc.
5. Our fellowship with the Lord requires effort like any relationship does. What do we do when our love to Christ grows weak? (**cf. Revelation 2:4-5**)
6. Remember Where He Came From
7. Jesus to the Pharisees – **John 8:13-14, 21-24, 56-58**
   1. **(vv. 13-14)** – Knows where He is from – after claiming to be light of the world.
   2. **(vv. 21-24)** – not from here, but from above (heaven).
      1. ***Lit. “if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins” (v. 24)***
   3. (**vv. 56-58**) – I AM – eternal, one with Jehovah **(cf. Exodus 3).**
8. He came down from heaven – **John 6:48-51; 12:37-41**
   1. **(12:37-41)** – the throne scene which Isaiah saw in **Isaiah 6** is referenced when it says Isaiah ***“saw His glory”*** – antecedent, **verse 37,** Christ.
   2. **Isaiah 6:1-4** – the glory of Jehovah in a vision – the glory of Christ.
9. This should be at the backdrop of our reading – **Matthew 6:19-21** – could they have fathomed where that exhortation truly came from in His heart? Do we?
   1. “Earth holds no treasures but perish with using; However precious they be; Yet there's a country to which I am going: Heaven holds all to me…Why should I long for the world and its sorrows, When in that home o'er the sea, Millions are singing the wonderful story? Heaven holds all to me.” (Heaven Holds All to Me)
   2. “In heaven no drooping nor pining, Nor wishing for else where to be; God's light is forever there shining, How beautiful heaven must be.” (How Beautiful Heaven Must Be)
   3. “Sing to me of heaven, let me fondly dream Of its golden glory, of its pearly gleam; Sing to me when shadows of the evening fall, Sing to me of heaven, Sweetest song of all.” (Sing to Me of Heaven)
10. ***“although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” (Philippians 2:6-7, NASB)***.
    1. He longed to get back – **John 17:5, 24**
11. When my love to Christ grows weak, let me think of what He left for me, and how He entered time from eternity. How He left a place that none desire to leave. How He left the place where I long to be and did so for me to be able to go there.
    1. A place where righteousness dwells – **2 Peter 3:13**
    2. A place without sorrow, pain, anguish, or tears – **Revelation 7:16-17**
    3. A place with no night – **Revelation 22:5**
12. Remember Where He Came To
13. **Philippians 2:6-7; John 1:14** – He came and dwelt among us, lowly men.
    1. ***“dwelt”*** – *skēnoō* – to fix one's tabernacle (THAYER)
    2. The fact that God provided a dwelling place for Himself among the Israelites in a representative way is astounding.
    3. That He literally came and walked among men, and had direct fellowship in their existence is incomprehensible – **Hebrews 2:11, 14**
14. When His people sought their own wisdom and redefined who God was it grieved Him – **Hosea 4:6; 6:4-7** – their lack of knowledge was concerning God Himself, and their faithfulness was vaporous.
    1. **John 1:10-11** – Jesus came to His own, and they did not receive Him.
    2. **Luke 4:16-21, 28-30** – He stood among His own people, and read an inspiring prophecy of good news, healing, liberation, and joy, saying it was here, and they sought to kill Him.
15. Consider what Jesus came to address – **Matthew 5-7**
    1. He came to a murderous, hateful people – **5:21-22**
    2. He came to an adulterous people – **5:27-28**
    3. He came to a dishonest people – **5:33-37**
    4. He came to a vengeful people – **5:38**
    5. He came to a biased and prejudiced people – **5:43**
    6. He came to a superficial, prideful, hypocritical people – **6:5**
    7. He came to an unforgiving people – **6:14-15**
    8. He came to a covetous people – **6:24**
    9. He came to a hypocritical, hypercritical, judgmental people – **7:1-3**
    10. He came to a people who loved false prophecy – **7:15**
16. When my love to Christ grows weak, let me think of how Jesus left the glories of heaven and came to a sin ridden world to rescue us from our own mess. How He came out of love to a world filled with hatred. How He left the Father to enter a world which sought to be rid of Him – **cf. 1 John 2:15-16**
17. Remember What He Did
18. “When my love to Christ grows weak, When for deeper faith I seek, Then in thought I go to Thee, Garden of Gethsemane! There I walk amid the shades, While the lingring twilight fades, See the suffering, friendless One, Weeping, praying there alone….Hill of Calvary, I go To the scenes of fear and woe. There behold His agony, Sufferd on the bitter tree; See Hs anguish, See his Faith, Love triumphant still in death.” (When My Love to Christ Grows Weak)
19. Christ has graciously established a memorial for us to observe every week to remind us of His great love, to strengthen our love for Him, and our faith – **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**
    1. **(v. 23)** – in His greatest hour of trial He was thinking of us – **cf. Luke 22:15-16**
    2. **(v. 23)** – He was betrayed – **cf. Psalm 41:9**
    3. **(v. 24)** – He gave His body for us – **cf. Hebrews 10:5-10**
    4. **(v. 25)** – He shed His blood for us – **cf. Hebrews 9:22-26**
    5. **(v. 26)** – He died for us – **cf. Romans 6:23; Hebrews 2:14-18**
20. Worthy observance pleases Him, and strengthens our love and faith – **1 Corinthians 11:27-29**
    1. Let us not misunderstand the passage.
    2. **(v. 27)** – unworthy eating and drinking is no observance at all, and amounts to guilt.
    3. **(v. 28**) – self-examination is key to observing such in a worthy manner.
       1. The following verse explains what this self-examination is about.
       2. ***“and so”*** – *houtōs* – “in this way (referring to what precedes or follows)” (STRONG)
       3. In what way?
    4. **(v. 29)** – judgment through not discerning the Lord’s body.
       1. **(vv. 24-25)** – ***“do this in remembrance of Me”***
       2. I.e. not with your mind on something else, not flippantly.
       3. **(v. 28) –** the self-examination is expressly with the purpose of making sure you’re thinking about the death of Christ, not thinking about your own life and whether you’re measuring up.
          1. Remembering the Death of Christ should cause us to reflect on our personal everyday lives – **1 Peter 1:17-19**
          2. However, that is not what this is talking about.
21. The physical toll was great, and the scene graphic – **Psalm 22:14-18**
    1. ““Crucifixion” (from Lat. crux [“cross”] and figere [to “attach”]) was a widespread and common method of capital punishment in the ancient world. Crucifixion was a horribly violent, sadistic and cruel affair. Cicero speaks of the punishment as the “most cruel and disgusting penalty” (Verr. 2.5.64.165-70) in which victims “died in pain and agony” and suffered the “worst extreme of the tortures inflicted on slaves” (Verr. 2.5.66.169). The main reason for the use of crucifixion as a punishment was its deterrent value (Hengel), which is noted by Josephus (J.W. 5.449-51). This is why the ancients placed crosses along well-traveled highways, on hilltops and at city gates…The victim was stripped, bound or nailed to the beam with outstretched arms. The feet or heels were bound or nailed to the upright beam. Sometimes a placard (titulus) was placed on the cross or around the victim’s neck announcing the crime(s) (Suetonius, Cal. 32.2; cf. Mk 15:26). The victim may have had a seat (sedile) or a small wooden peg for a footrest that would prolong the torturous pain and stave off death by asphyxiation. Sometimes victims would remain alive for days, with death coming by either loss of blood (due to previous tortures) or asphyxiation.” (Dennis, J. Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, IVP)
22. The spiritual significance further rends the heart, yet heals it, and draws it nearer to Jesus in deep love **– Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12** 🡪
23. Remember Who He Did It For
24. **John 3:16; 1 John 3:16** – the love of God and Christ which led to Him coming and dying was for the whole world.
25. It should not escape us that ***“the world”*** which God is said to have ***“so loved”*** that He would send His Son to die for it is an expression of a whole of which I am a part.
    1. Jesus knows me – **John 1:47-49 (cf. Psalm 139:1-4)**
    2. Peter had denied Jesus, but was restored and wrote – **1 Peter 2:21-25**
    3. Paul had persecuted Jesus, but was converted and wrote – **1 Timothy 1:12-17**
    4. The cross is meant to be shared. It is a treasure so precious that to withhold it from another would be to commit the highest of crimes. It is not for me, but for everybody.
    5. Yet, the cross is personal, and is meant to elicit the most intimate gratitude which can only come from the honest assessment of personal guilt.
26. When my love to Christ grows weak, I need to stop and remember what I’ve done, what I deserve, and why I can have the hope of life eternal despite these hideous realities. It is because Jesus died for me that I have hope – **Romans 5:5-11**

**Conclusion**

1. There may be times when we feel ourselves starting to drift. Our zeal cools off, and our love is a shell of its former self.
2. These moments require us to make a decision – inaction is a possible one. Are we going to stoke the fires of our love for Christ, and meditate upon these things? Or will we let our love completely die off, and forfeit the greatest gift that has ever been offered?