

Fired With Love; A Man Like God

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[0 : 00] So we're in the godly man's picture week three. I'm going to begin with a little review. We've already learned from Pastor John and Pastor Jason some of the characteristics of godliness itself!

There's an inward thing, an extensive thing, a glorious thing, and one other thing. Somebody tell us? What's that?

You don't have to speak up. I'm old. Begins with a P. Permanent thing, right. Well, Pastor John also taught us about Watson's warning that a mere pretense of godliness is a god-enraging sin. It's self-delusional, it's odious and offensive both to men and to God, and it forfeits both earthly pleasures and heavenly rewards.

Hypocrisy or pretended godliness may fool people into thinking we're more godly than we actually are, but it earns the curse of God, and it earns the scorn of Satan to think that you would choose an outwardly religious life and religious path that only leads to hell.

[1 : 37] And then last Sunday, Pastor Jason explained how the godly man or woman, their picture is marked with the characteristics of both faith and knowledge.

One of the definitions he used was that faith is a real loving trust of all that God is for me through Christ. Faith is not some nebulous force of will like wishful thinking that magically gives you what you're craving for.

Faith is a gift from God to the Christian that's like an artery connecting us to the heart of God, which is Jesus Christ himself.

Faith is trusting in a saving person, but it's also trusting in a saving message. There's truth, there's knowledge, there's historical content, there is a gospel that faith must believe and cling to.

It's Paul who told the Galatians, I've been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself.

[2 : 58] For me. So there is that history, there is that, those facts about Christ and what he did that we must rely upon. This gospel knowledge comes to men and women through the scriptures that are breathed out by God.

And that's why our picture of the godly man or the godly woman is a picture drawn from the scriptures, drawn with a scriptural pencil, as it were.

And the godly person appreciates and appropriates this knowledge because it's true, it animates us, it transforms us, and it's increasing and becoming more and more practical as we mature in the Lord.

So this brings us to the two basic marks of the heaven-bound person we'll be covering today. A godly man is fired by love to God.

And a godly man is like God. We're going to cover those two characteristics. Watson uses as his key text Psalm 116.1.

[4 : 13] I love the Lord, for he heard my voice. He heard my cry for mercy. And he begins this short section on love with the following claim.

Faith and love are the two poles on which all religion turns. A true saint is carried in that chariot. The midst whereof is paved with love. That comes from Song of Solomon 3.10. The poles he's writing about are like the north pole and the south pole on which the earth turns.

Or they're the hubs of two wheels on a chariot. And I researched this a little bit and found out that the chariot that he's talking about is actually the wedding chariot.

We think of chariots as being used for warfare. And hopefully the wedding chariot won't lead to any warfare. But it's a way of bringing the bride and the groom to the groom's home where the wedding

will take place.

[5 : 25] And many of these poetic images that the Puritans use and many of the writers from past centuries use are probably kind of strange to our ears because modern readers are used to reading much more realistic type of expression.

But the Bible contains many picturesque and romantic images when it speaks of love. Both on the emotional plane, the inner workings of love, and the outward expressions, the practical expressions of love.

The Song of Solomon is an extended poem about courtship and marital love that has been widely interpreted as a metaphor for Christ's love for his bride, the church, and her love for him.

So this wedding chariot has these two hubs of the two wheels. And the one hub, Watson says, is faith. And the other hub is love.

And on those two poles, the wheels rotate and we make progress in the religious life, in the Christian life. That's what he's talking about. So if faith is the hub of the wheel that connects us to the knowledge of Christ, the other hub, love, connects us to the beauty of Christ, the desirability, the attractiveness of Christ, what he is to the heart of the Christian.

[7 : 01] And it's faith that enlivens us, Watson says, enlivens us to the truth of Christ, the knowledge of Christ, how wonderful the truth is that Christ is and shares with us.

But it's the inner fire of our love that sweetens those duties that the truth leads us to. We find out the truth of who God is and what he's done for us through Christ.

And also what he requires of us in the way of sanctification, growing in the Lord. We find that in the truth of his word and the knowledge that we're gaining as we look at that truth.

And it is the love, Watson says, that sweetens those duties, that makes them desirable, that gives us the gratitude in our hearts, the desire to do what God requires of us.

We love him because he first loved us. 1 John 4.19 Peter confessed his love for the Lord three times after Jesus' resurrection, probably because he had denied the Lord three times the night he was arrested.

[8 : 24] And it's as if Peter was saying, Although I denied you, my Savior, it was due to lack of strength, not for lack of love.

Yes, you know all things. You know that I love you. So if we've come to possess a true understanding of the Christ of the Bible, not the misunderstanding of the world of who Jesus is, but a true biblical understanding of Christ, if we have that, we can look within ourselves, and if we find any affection, any real love, genuine love for this Christ, then that's at least one reliable sign that our faith is genuine, that it is a real saving faith.

For when this Holy Spirit regenerates us, he doesn't just change our hearts from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh, the Holy Spirit comes into us and indwells our soul.

And when it takes up residence in the heart, he brings with him the love of God, the affection for Christ. That true love, that true agape, brings it along with him, Romans 5.5.

That love, in turn, is the soil in which all the other fruits of the Holy Spirit are nourished and produced in our life, throughout the life of the believer.

[10 : 00] Watson writes, The pious soul loves God and therefore thirsts for him. The more he drinks, the more he wants.

If we read Psalm 42 especially, and see that image of the deer panting after the streams of water, and he asked the question, When can I go and meet with God?

That's the driving force in the psalmist's heart. That person longs for God to appear to him. He longs for the appearing of Christ. Christ's return, 2 Timothy 4.8.

And like the beloved bride in the Song of Solomon, she goes about inquiring, Where is he? Where is the one whom my soul loves?

And even the Apostle Paul, when he wrote to the Philippians, he said, I'm torn between the two, whether to stay here, which is more needful to you, or to go and be with Christ, which is far better.

[11 : 07] He knew Christ, and therefore he longed to be, as Watson said, in the bosom of Christ. The godly man or woman loves God, Watson says, though reduced to straits.

What did he mean by that? That means that I've come to be in desperate straits, in desperate situations, where humanly I have no hope left for me.

Watson tells of a mother and a small child, who are about to die of hunger, and the little one asks, Mother, do you think God will starve us?

No, child, he will not, she replied. But if he does, replied the child, we must love him, and serve him. So the godly love, even if frowning God, even when his providences are dark, even when it's difficult, we go on loving him, because the Holy Spirit has gifted us, with that love in our hearts. We learned in week number one, of this study, that godliness is a glorious thing, that it makes us beautiful, in God's eyes.

[12:28] And since he, is the measure, the exemplar, the standard, of all that is beautiful, in fact, we could say that God, is beauty itself. Then he, above all others, deserves, our passionate love.

He's to be desired, beyond, all the riches, that we could find, in all of creation. The time we must spend, apart from him, must cause a deep, longing, in our souls, that can only be silenced, when we return, to his beloved presence.

And again, look at Psalm 42, for David's, or actually the, the sons of, sons of Korah, wrote that Psalm.

So we can rightly measure, our likeness, to the godly man's picture, by this. Do I love him? Is he my chief treasure, in life?

In life. Great men, of the past, like King David, used to express, their love for God, by these, great public displays, of joy, and ecstasy.

[13:37] David, danced, with all his might, before the ark, the throne of God, in 2 Samuel 6. And in Psalm 43, David calls the Lord, my exceeding, joy.

Notice there, that to him, God was not just, the fountain, the source, the maintainer, of David's joy, but, God himself, was his joy.

His exceeding joy. And then, as he does with all, of these characteristics, Watson challenges us, to consider the contrast, in the lives of those, who lack, this love to God.

In their hearts. So let's ask ourselves, instead are we, eaten up with self love? Love of ease. Love of worldly profit.

Love of our lusts. Are we happy, to be rid of God? Are we, relieved, when the service is over, and we can, go do other things?

[14:43] Do we go through, the motions of worship? With hearts, hearts, that are, far from the Lord. Watson writes, he whose heart is a grave, in which the love of God, is buried, deserves to have that curse, written upon his tombstone, let him be, anathema.

From 1 Corinthians 16, 22. We've just celebrated, Valentine's Day, a day, devoted to the expression, of love.

A godly man, or woman, is one who is fired, by love to God. Compelled to find in him, our highest joy, and fulfillment, longing to spend time, in his presence, and entering his courts, with praise.

Songs of praise, that all can hear. It takes courage, to outwardly express, our love for God, the way David did. So that's the first, mark, of the heaven bound person, we want to look at.

Are there any, comments about that? Or any questions? Well secondly then, the godly person, is like God.

[16:03] It's one thing, to profess God, Watson writes, it's another thing, to resemble him. So, which attribute, of God, do you think, Watson would emphasize, when considering, our likeness, to the Lord?

Think of God's attributes, which one, do you think, he would emphasize, when talking about, is a man or woman, like God? His holiness, his holiness.

That, that he considers, the most brilliant pearl, in the king of heaven's crown. God's power, makes him mighty, his mercy, makes him lovely, it's his holiness, that makes him glorious.

Watson writes, of course, God is holy, in a sense, that no other being, can be. We look at Isaiah 6, verse 3, and we see, the chant, of the angels, singing back and forth, the, trisagion, the, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.

He is most holy. Watson calls, God's holiness, his intrinsic purity, and his abhorrence, of sin.

[17:31] So, a godly person, may not, be as, intrinsically, pure, as God is, and yet, there is a real, analogy, or a, similarity, between, God's holiness, and that, of a godly man.

So that, he is said, to be like God, a definite family resemblance, in other words. Watson writes about, the Old Testament, priestly garments, from Exodus 28, 2, which had the oil, of consecration, on them, as well as the words, holy to the Lord.

And he talks about, the garments, of the Lord's people, whether in ancient Israel, or in the Christian era. They are to be marked, by the holiness, of the saints.

And he describes that, as what consists, of their conformity, to God's will. Which is the rule, and pattern, of all holiness.

So just as the saved sinner, receives the gift of love, for God, when the spirit of God, indwells him, he also receives, the holy spirit.

[18 : 46] Who changes, the inclination, of his heart. So that I genuinely, desire to please, the Lord, and conform myself, to his will. That rule, and pattern, Watson writes about, is perfectly embodied, in a person.

The Lord Jesus. In his earthly life, and ministry, the Lamb of God, was glorious, in his holiness. And holiness, is likewise, to be the glory, of the godly person, who follows after Christ.

By God's saving grace, we are being transformed, more and more, into the image, of our Savior, and Lord. Philippians 1.6 says, being confident, of this very thing, that he who began, a good work in you, will be faithful, to complete it, until the day, of Christ Jesus.

Jesus. Now those, who are like God, in their holiness, says Watson, will reveal, that likeness, in two ways.

First of all, by hating the garment, spotted, by the flesh. That's from Jude 23. They set themselves, against evil, both in purpose, and in practice.

[20 : 07] One way, this is evident, in the godly person's life, is the way, they seek to avoid, wounding, the consciences, of their weaker, brothers and sisters.

There are times, when doing, what we are free, to do, in Christ, can cause a brother, to stumble, and violate, his own conscience.

We can read about that, in Romans 14, and 1 Corinthians 8. A Christian, who is setting his heart, on holiness, will limit, his own freedom, if it will prevent, sin, in somebody else.

That's how much, he loves, holiness, and hates, sin. The Lord, was specific, in the boundaries, he set, for the Israelites, when giving them, the law.

Of course, it is part, and parcel, of our fallen, sinful humanity, to cross, those boundaries, or get as close, to them as we can. But in the hearts, and actions, of those, who are godly, even to approach, such a boundary, between what's permissible, and what is forbidden, is seen, as a dangerous thing.

[21 : 25] They're hesitant, to do that, to even approach, the boundary. The godly man, shares, God's, abhorrence, of sin, and thus, he won't go, as far, as he may, lest he go, further, than he should.

In other words, the godly, conscience, is precious, to that person, and, is especially, sensitive, to the boundaries, that God, has established.

Secondly, the second way, a godly, man or woman, will reveal holiness, is by being, advocates, of it. Verse 46, of Psalm 119, says, I will speak, of thy testimonies, before kings, and will not be ashamed, to speak out, in favor of holiness, to people, who, don't believe in it, takes courage.

It takes, a commitment, to holiness, to speak out, in favor of it. The apostle Paul, was not ashamed, to testify of Christ, to King Agrippa, and even Emperor Nero, even when it eventually, cost him his life.

John the Baptist, could have probably, had a longer, and more, respectable ministry, humanly speaking, if he hadn't challenged, the immoral marriage, of Herod Antipas.

[22 : 59] But he was bold, in standing up, for God's standards, of righteousness, even when, they were disregarded, by the rich, and powerful, of his day. Can we name, some other figures, you can think of, that, stood up for holiness, when it was being, ridiculed, or ignored, by others?

Joshua, Joshua, who? Daniel, great examples, anyone else?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, stood up, in the face, of rank, idolatry, so, being willing, to advocate, for this glorious, aspect, of God's nature, is one of the, clearest marks, of the godly person, and of course, being advocates, for Christ himself, is to, be in support, of the holy one.

Watson, again, writes about those, who embrace, the opposite, of holiness, and yet, consider, themselves, to belong, to Christ. Matthew 7, 22, and following, make it plain, that not a few, but many, will claim, to have known, and serve Jesus, throughout their lives, even perform, exorcisms, and miracles, in his name, and yet, the judge will say, I never knew you, depart from me, you workers, of iniquity.

He, Watson, talks about those, who even boast, that they don't, have anything to do, with those, holy people, as if holiness, is a mark of shame.

[24 : 47] Watson asks, how can such people, claim to be godly? And naturally, outright evil, in the world, spits its venom, at holiness.

There are those, who are so sold, into sin, even as Paul, claimed to be, once, that they actively, fight against holiness, wherever, and whenever, they encounter it.

So much so, that the early church, when it began, to spread out, into a wicked world, was met, with a bloody tide, of persecution. First, by the Jews, led by Saul, of Tarsus.

Then, by the Romans, attacking the zeal, of these Christians, who refused, to bow the knee, to anyone, except the Lord Jesus. I had to think, here in America, the Christian church, has been relatively, tame, when it comes to, voicing its opposition, to evil, in our society.

Perhaps, the absence, of overt, persecution, in our nation, says more, about the lack, of holiness, in the church, than it does, about the moral fiber, of America.

[26 : 01] Maybe, we've learned, to accommodate evil, rather than, zealously, confronting it. Well, Watson gives, three reasons, to strive, to be like God, in holiness.

Reason number one, this is God's, great design, he drives on, in the world. Holiness, is the object, of the word, being preached. The purpose, behind all of God's, prosperous, and adverse, providences.

And the object, of the Holy Spirit's, work, in our hearts. All of these, are meant, to produce, holiness, in the soul. Number two, holiness, is that alone, with which, God is delighted.

Tamerlane, the Mongol, conqueror, was given, a pot of gold, but rejected it, because it didn't, bear the stamp, of his father. Likewise, God will reject, anything, or anyone, who fails, to bear, his own likeness.

That's why, we must plead, the blood of Christ. The blood of the lamb, which covers, and pays for, all of our sin. And number three, holiness, fits us, for communion, with God.

[27 : 21] Like, in a king's court, we might go about, serving him, and doing that, duty, or this, duty, for him. But having communion, with the king, is a different matter.

Is our heart, frightened, to come before, a holy God? Or is it warmed, and comforted, to be in his presence, because of the, holy spirit's, preparations.

Where God, sees his likeness, Watson writes, there he gives, his love. And so, we're back to love, again. We have that, love relationship, with the Lord, and where God, sees that likeness, that's where he, sheds his love, abroad.

Because, the Holy Spirit, brings that, into our hearts. So, Watson's challenge, to us, would be to search, our own hearts, and lives, this week, and pray for the grace, of God, that each of us, would be fired, by love to God, that we would bear, God's likeness, in the beauty, of his holiness.

Right. Well, let's, close in prayer. Father, how we thank you, for your word, how we thank you, for the ministry, of your spirit, which indwells, and empowers us, teaches us, reveals your word, your will to us.

[28 : 51] Help us, oh God, to, be a blessing, to one another, as we, leave, and go, to the worship service. Help us, Lord, to reflect, that, love that you, have put in our hearts, and that, that holiness, that you've given us, such a desire for, to please you, and to serve you, faithfully.

And we pray these things, in Jesus name. Amen.