

Sermon Notes

Jealousy: Marriage & Eating

1 Corinthians 10:22;

November 15, 2015

Introduction: *Weighty Words*

A single verse, and the words are obvious, rather clear...straightforward. These are words about provoking, and this is to poke, to prod, to stir up, to move to action. These are words about provoking *the Lord*; poking at, stirring up His jealousy—His already existing jealousy (like holiness). This is actually a question about poking or jabbing at the jealousy: *Do you really want to do that!?*

To this is added a second question: *Are we stronger than God?*

Jealousy

Jealousy as sin-ful

We know of jealousy as sinful. It is listed among the “fruit of the flesh” in Galatians 5:20, and this in contrast to what the Spirit of God produces. In 2 Cor. 12:20 it is warned against as it is found in the bad company of contentions, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbiting, whisperings, conceits, and tumults.

Jealousy is also fierce

It is said to be “as cruel as the grave” (Song 8:6), and this is because it is related to love, intimacy, and devotion. Similarly, when a husband’s jealousy is aroused its fury will not spare in the day of vengeance (Prov. 6:34). Therefore, the straightforward question is asked: “Who is able to stand before jealousy” (Prov. 27:4)?

Jealousy may also be righteous

The Lord’s name is “Jealous” and He acts according to His name (Exodus 34:14). Our Lord is spoken of as “a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deut. 4:24), and His jealousy is packaged together with His wrath (Ezekiel 38:19).

The Lord is jealous *for* faithfulness; He is jealous *in* His faithfulness. He keeps His word. He does what He says He will do. In this, our Lord is a faithful husband, and He calls for faithfulness from His chosen Bride. *The Lord jealously requires faithfulness.* Unfaithfulness—infidelity—stirs up the Lord’s jealousy; it pokes at, provokes, and moves the Lord to action.

Throughout Scriptural history, we find the jealousy of the Lord to be stirred up whenever various forms of idolatry are present...and idolatry is always lessened devotion/fidelity to the Lord (see the 2nd Commandment).

Furthermore, throughout the Bible idolatry is likened unto harlotry; a form of infidelity to the Lord.

The Lord, as seen in our context, requires fully devoted communion. *“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Table of the Lord and the table of demons”* (10:21).

Our Context & Biblical Connections

As there is a real communion which occurs in the eating and drinking, as well as the Table of the Lord being a place where the Lord (as the Bridegroom) is providing for His bride, it makes sense for some words about jealousy to be mentioned (10:22).

It’s also likely that Paul is drawing deeply from the Scriptures and from biblical history. It is possible that he is alluding to a passage in the Law of Moses which concerns marital fidelity, a jealousy test, and which also includes a drinking from a cup.

Numbers 5

The Passage itself—those who are married; with some suspicion of infidelity; no one is omniscient; brought to the tabernacle/temple; before the priest; ample opportunity is given for sin to be confessed; an apparent willingness to go through with this...

The Process—the purpose is understood; an offering of “remembrance” is offered; there is water in a basic earthen vessel, and dust is placed in the water; the woman’s head is uncovered; direct questions are asked so that she may testify with the mouth; the water is to be put to the mouth; and the results are to be evident at some later time...

What’s to be made of this?

This is not the only dust drinking in the Bible. This other instance of “dust drinking” will show the connection between unfaithfulness and idolatry, and Paul has just made reference to this other instance in this same passage. Paul quoted Exodus 32:6 (1 Cor. 10:7), and that was the incident of idolatry with the golden calf. After this, Moses burned the calf in fire, ground it to powder (dust), scattered it over the water, and had the children of Israel drink it (Exodus 32:20).

Even so, there is no record of the Numbers 5 jealousy test being done in the Bible.

John 8

However, there is another likely allusion to this Law, and it was being followed by Jesus. In John 8, there was a presumably unfaithful woman who was brought to Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees. She was brought to Jesus as a test to see what He would do. Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground—in the dust of the ground—twice!

Jesus—the Faithful Bridegroom

Although there is no known record of that jealousy test being performed in the Bible, it is possible that Jesus has fulfilled this for us, on our behalf. It’s not just a matter of Jesus being jealous for His own glory, He is also jealous for His bride, and was willing to take our place, and to drink the cup; for He is the One who bore our sins and represents us faithfully.