

Well, there's no way for me to convey to you how much my heart is wrapped up in this message this morning. I'd give anything if it could have been some other way than this. This is just a plain old vanilla Thursday morning, and no one was expecting anything particular. I don't know if you remember when I stopped speaking on the Lord's passion for us, but it was about the time that we discovered the sisterhood of Mary. I would have given anything on this earth if you and I could have gone to Phoenix, Arizona, and met those women, and we didn't get to go.

There is something about the conduct of those women that I would like the brothers and sisters to see, though I myself have never seen them. Not that I would like for that conduct to be emulated in any way, but to see that there are people who have a certain conduct toward the Lord outside of the normal institutional way of conducting themselves toward the Lord. You and I do not realize it, but we are greatly affected by present-day Christianity and by our own national way of expressing ourselves.

There's a great paradox in America. We are a hybrid people. We are a people who will bow down before a cross in a Roman Catholic church or an Episcopal church or even in a Baptist church very quietly and reverently, and go out that same afternoon and scream our heads off and beat one another over a piece of cowhide being kicked from one end of the pasture to the other. That isn't proper. You ought to be able to scream and holler and beat one another over the Lord Jesus, too.

There's a conduct missing in Christians, and you and I are going to have to remedy it. There's a physical attitude toward Jesus Christ that needs to change. I'll lay that aside; that's not the purpose of this message. Very rarely would I ever say what my next sentence is. A year ago, I could not have brought the message I'm going to bring this morning if the Lord allows me to bring it. Now, that's probably been untrue of virtually anything else I've ever said here. I have only in the last year come to some understanding of what I'm going to speak to you about this morning. I might have brought the message, but I sure couldn't have matched it with experience. I hope that what is said this morning will alter every life here. It's like the admonition of what Paul said, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child. I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things and came up to something much higher."

If you ever see me not living up to what I'm going to talk about this morning, will you stop me? I won't be put out by you. You know, I used to sit under a brother, and he just really provoked me sometimes. We were walking down the street in New York City one day. Oh, it was in a residential area. It was about 10:00 at night, and he was complaining about the Plymouth Brethren, and he was just criticizing the Plymouth Brethren. I had never met a Plymouth Brethren. As far as I was concerned, the Plymouth Brethren were something that died out a hundred years ago. I still feel the same way, by the way. It was so real to him. I just stopped and turned to him, and I said, "Brother, those are old battles fought long, long, long ago. That's not what I want to hear." I don't know if it stopped him that night or not. I'll tell you this, it didn't stop him. I hope it stops me. If you ever catch me breaking with what I say today, you remind me of what I said this morning, would you? Because on it hangs all the law and the prophets. This will radically alter your conduct

if you allow it. It will change you completely. I hope when you're an old man or an old woman, you can speak of it to young brothers and sisters and then witness it in your life.

I think I'd better change my ways here and read the verses that I had planned to. Would you turn to the book of James? Can anybody tell me now why I'm reading from the book of James? Can anybody make it a little clearer? Okay, well, and then explain it this way: it's the next logical book to read after finishing the life of Christ, and when you get out of the Lord's life, you're going to have to go either to Acts or James, you don't have any choice, because those two books record...now listen to my words very carefully...they record the early conduct of the bride of Jesus Christ. I'm going to repeat that. They are the first books to record the conduct of the Lord's bride.

It is James 1:12. It was written to a group of people who were being persecuted. *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial. For once he has been approved...that is, once he has passed the test...he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who persevere under trial.* Read that again. Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial. For once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of... once he has passed the test, you'll receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who persevere under trial. Is that correct? Alright, I want to read that again. Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial. For once he has passed the test, he will receive the crown of life which was promised to those who love Him.

Now, I am only asking you one question, and please don't answer it. I ask you, "What is the test?" What is the test? A parallel verse. James 2:5. *Listen, my beloved brethren, did not God choose the poor of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who were poor.* Listen, my beloved brethren. Did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith, a richness which He gave to those who were poor? Did not God choose the poor of this world to be heirs of the kingdom which He had promised to those who were poor? I'm going to read it again. Did not God choose the poor of the world to be rich in faith? The faith He promised to those who love them. Did not God choose the poor of this world to be heirs of the kingdom? The kingdom He promised to those who love them. Those are my verses. *And for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame.*

Father, if I have any prayer this morning, it is this: that you will cataclysmically alter our lives. Cataclysmically alter the church in Isla Vista. God be my help, and in the coming days give a profound impression to Your people. We're so small in number. I often wonder Your ways, Lord. But Lord, here we are, poor in number. Make us so rich with experience. My brothers and sisters are quite young, but Lord, that should not prevent them from having a testimony to You, that is so incredible and so stunning. I ask You to alter the way of my sisters. Alter the way of my brothers. Lord, alter me just as You altered my Lord and the early disciples. I ask You to raise the standard this morning in all our lives. Have mercy on us. We're very awkward people, and we have a very difficult time handling Your truth. But by Your patience, Lord, and by our hearts, if You'll keep loving us and having mercy on us and giving us grace we don't deserve, perhaps we'll make it. God, do bless us this morning.

When the Lord came up out of the baptizing waters, He was truly the Son of God. He had known the Father in eternity, which, of course, was a great help to Him. He had not yet been declared the Son of God. He had not yet finished His sojourn on this earth in perfect order. He came up out of that water under several obligations and with several intentions. His obligation to the Father was perfect obedience to the Father's will and to the Father's word at every moment.

I repeat that. His obligation to the Father was perfect obedience at all times to the Father's will and to the Father's word. But He was also God, and He was also man, and He was looking for a wife. What kind of a wife was He looking for? *He was looking for a wife just like Himself.*

Now listen, the book of Revelation says *she made herself ready*. Most people construe that verse to mean that she made herself holy, because it mentions her garment in that passage. That is not what it says. It says that she made herself ready. That's all it said. My strong impression is that she made herself ready by having become like Him. Now, I want someone in this room to stand up and, in one short sentence, tell me how you become like the Lord Jesus Christ.

By seeing Him. By seeing Him. I tell you, I got a new task, and that is for the rest of my life, all I'm going to do...I will tell you this now so you can get prepared for this: to show people Jesus Christ. All the world personally needs is to see Jesus. Alright, you're going to have to see Him today...And His wife is like Him. I did not say she must be like Him. I'll tell you, brothers, if she sees Him and if she loves Him, she will be like Him. She can't keep from it. I believe that.

The Lord's wife does not have to be scoured and browbeaten to become like her groom. All she needs to do is see Him. I tell you this: that beating inside the breast of that one called Jesus is a passionate God, and beating inside that one called Jesus was a passionate man, under obedience to the Father, but also very much in love, looking for a bride.

Well, I'll tell you, I'll put it this way: Jesus Christ was under dual love. Would some of you brothers do me a favor, someday, when all the messages on the Lord's love are made available to you? Will you spend about five years of your life passionately loving the Lord, reading the Bible, getting to know Him, understanding these messages, and then proclaim His love to the world and do about a hundred times better a job than I'm doing right now? What I have to say has never been said before, but once it's said, it ought to be clear, more clearly understood by people who are smarter than I am. Brothers, you'll be able to make it clearer what I'm talking about this morning.

Jesus Christ...do me that favor, would you? Jesus Christ was under dual love. What was that love? He was being loved by the Father, and He was in love with the church. He was looking for a woman to be His wife. Well, you know, throughout His life, the Lord carried a cross, but only once was He crucified. I have said to you frequently that if you bear the Lord's cross, the Lord will give you honor. Do you know what that honor is? Someday, He will honor you with the crucifixion. You'll get crucified.

The Lord bore the cross throughout the 33 years, and He was crucified. They found no fault in Him, and they crucified Him. As sisters and brothers, don't be too impressed by the fact that He

was God this morning, would you? Would you look at Him in His manhood rather than His deity? Please say two words this morning. One is obedience, and one is love. And I'd like to place another thought out there in front of you, and that word is sovereignty.

God was loving Christ, and Christ was loving the church, His bride. I'll call it His wife. The Lord was returning obedience to the Father. The Father was giving love; the Lord was returning obedience, and He was at the same moment giving out love. I also have to add that the Lord was loving the Father. He was loving the Father for what the Father was doing in His life.

This is an absolutely incomprehensible thing. Please look at it, for there are only three divine creatures in the universe, and one of them is sitting here at my feet. And I'm sorry, it's mine. But truly, one of those divine creatures is sitting here at my feet, learning the ways of divinity. There is the way of divinity, and the only way you can see it...the conduct of divinity is seen in Jesus Christ. Okay, the Lord was human, and God brought Him one day to be crucified. And previous to the crucifixion, for about 48 hours...what the Roman Catholics call His passion...previous to His death was His suffering.

Jesus, the second divine creature, suffered and went to the cross and was crucified. What was His attitude during the suffering? Alright, I will accept silence. Submission, joy. Take all those words, obedient, submission, joy, and crown them with one word. Jesus Christ took the suffering in an act of passion. There's a post. Imagine a man standing up by it, his arms wrapped around it, and his wrists tied, imagining their whipped scars. I want you to know that most people who go through that resent, fear, or have no thought except their own discomfort. But Jesus Christ stood there while absolutely no one in the universe knew it. No one cared what His attitude was. No one gave roses to Him for His attitude that day. But the Father knew.

If I could have seen His face, now God forgive me for what I'm about to say, but I don't really know how to say it, so I'll say it this way. If I could have seen His face, and if it had not been on His face, if I could have felt His heart, I would have seen...I would have known...and I would have felt the Lord accepting that suffering with a love being expressed within His being. *A love passionate*. If I speak of God, I say then like the divine love that was pinned up in God for all eternity that wanted out, with all the power of the Godhead behind it. If I speak of a man, then I have to say with a love as intense as the love a man is pouring out in hot passion upon the woman he loves.

Jesus Christ took the suffering, not from the hand of a Roman soldier, but He took that suffering from the hand of God and interpreted it as an expression of God's passionate love for Him, and He received it with a passionate love for her. I'd like you to go back and feel that one more time. His back was there, lay bare, and He was being whipped unjustly, illegally, unmercifully, without cause. His attitude was one of complete abandonment of an expression of love.

My Lord could see divinely. My God, my Lord Jesus, had divine eyes. He could see something. Please listen. He could see that every act of God toward Him was an act of love. But He could see

more than that. Please listen. He could see that every act toward Him was from God. Now put those together. He could see that every act toward Him was from God. And He could see that every act toward Him was an expression of God's passionate love for Him.

That was the conduct of divine creature number two. Everything that happened to Him was from the hand of God. And everything that happened to Him was an expression of love. Alright, I'd like you to see the Lord. What is His attitude and response? There is this: He was obedient. He was obedient. He responded with an expression of abandonment to what the Lord was doing. He responded with love.

I told you that the Lord Jesus was under dual love a moment ago. He was being loved by the Father, and He loved the church. When He came to the time, not of the cross, but of the crucifixion, He obeyed the Father in love and at the same moment out of a deed in utter love for His wife, for His bride...He suffered for her. He loved her and gave Himself for her. If you could have been inside of Jesus Christ that day, you could have felt Him. He was accepting it as fast as it was being given to Him. He was abandoning Himself to it, and that was the conduct of the Groom toward the girl He loved, and toward the Father...toward the Father who what? Who meted it out to Him.

Sister, you need a new God. As far as that goes, the whole Christian family needs a new God. The Lord forgive me...I hope my words aren't cruel. Our present God needs to be dumped. His name isn't God; His name is Santa Claus. We sing a song, and I love it. We got a great big wonderful God. But I like the song that says, "God is a good God." You know that song? Never heard that song. It's sung on the radio quite frequently by one of the evangelist's programs. Does anybody know it? I got a wonderful God. I've got a God full of wonder. I also have a good God, but not like that guy means it. That guy means he's a god who will prosper you. Is your god a god who will lead you to a whipping post?

Well, I know that God is...but is your God? Well, I will even say some people have a God, and they very well would believe that He would let Him be led to a whipping post. It's a terrible God. But have you got a God, who, out of a passionate love for you, will decree such suffering in your life? You know that is the easiest God in the universe to misplace. Do you understand what I mean? When He comes as such a God, you never recognize it as the Lord. Circumstances and suffering. And not only must we recognize it as the Lord's hand, not only that, but we must see it as an act of passionate love. But that's not all, either.

Well, that's the way the Lord. I don't have to tell you that you don't like to suffer. Do I? Do I have to tell you that John? Do I have to tell you that? God wants to just be God. And really, He's very, very stubborn about the whole thing. Well, do you suffer? I hope you do. I hope you still suffer, because if you don't, the forward move of God in your life isn't there. I have had to learn a lot of lessons just by standing there and watching them. You know this; here's a brother who starts out with the Lord. Boy, that is the fieriest, most enthusiastic...he's got a deeper insight, he's the one who gets up with the neatest testimony. Everybody is saying, "Wow, boy, that's going to be a brother and a half...or a sister." Then he takes blow number one and blow number two. One day,

he reaches his maximum cross, and he does not see the Lord's hand; he only sees the circumstance. And what he actually says is, I am suffering greatly for the Lord, and this is unfair, and you're a bunch of dirty unmentionables, and I'm going to have nothing to do with you...or my boss is a dirty unmentionable...or my wife...or something.

And now he becomes a miserable creature. But I want you to know that that is suffering...and that is misery. And there's a world of difference. The forward move of God in His life has ended. I want you to know that pretty soon the misery will pass, and the joy will be gone too. But the Lord will not bother him anymore. He'll just kind of settle down with a good God, and after a while, there'll be the color TV set and the big automobile, and he'll camp right there, and that's where it's going to be. There'll be times when the Lord will spur him and revive him a little, and every time it will be simply to put him right back there...and he's not going anywhere. And sister, you're not going anywhere...and brother, you're not going anywhere till you get right back to that same cross. And what you once refused, you bloody go through it.

There's only one way you can escape the cross. I wonder if anybody in this room can remember what I said. What? There is only one way you can escape the cross. Only one way - *by opening your mouth*. How do you escape the cross? *Open your mouth*. You immediately escape. Had the Lord opened His mouth at the trial, He would have escaped it. But I don't want to get off on that. Are you still under the heat of God? Is the furnace still blazing? Boy, it better be for those whom He loves.

Be careful. I hope you don't ever graduate from the love of God. The Lord Jesus Christ did not graduate from the Lord's love. That is a great big picture of suffering. Sometimes I have to see a great big picture in order to handle a little bit of reality. Do you understand me? Sometimes I have to see the Lord suffering to get through one lousy roommate. I want you to know something. You have to get to a lousy roommate before the Lord will ever get you this. If the Lord never gives you this, it means you never got past your lousy roommate. You never learned to keep your mouth closed.

I'll come back to this one day. I want you to know something - you win the right to be crucified. You win it. If you please, you earn it. How? Right, Michael, by bearing the cross, and the day you lay the cross down, you're out of the race. You'll never win the opportunity to be crucified. You know what's on the other side of every cross? A bigger cross. And you know what's on the other side of the biggest cross? Our crucifixion. You know what's on the other side of the crucifixion? The resurrection. **THE** resurrection. Not a resurrection; *THE* Resurrection.

Simon Peter got tied to a whipping post. Isn't that exciting? You think me mad...but isn't that exciting? Simon...the coward. Simon the quicksilver...hot one day, cold next. Brave as thunder one day, as cowardly as a mouse the next. Simon Peter got tied to a whipping post...probably not too far away from the place where his Lord was tied to a whipping post. Okay. Who's next? Paul of Tarsus. Maybe Patty can help me. Patty...it's four strips of leather. Two made out of donkey-hide and two made out of cowhide. 4 * 195? 780 lashes across the back. What did he say about it?

“I count it all as nothing for the surpassing knowledge, the surpassing excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.”

Paul of Tarsus had a back that looked like corrugated cardboard because of the brutal beatings he had gotten in his lifetime. I have told you before; I tell you again, brothers and sisters: he never once let it get inside him. But now I ask you why. As an act of love from the hand of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I want to ask you, was the Lord Jesus beautiful? Was He beautiful in being whipped? Was He? He was beautiful. Simon Peter, when it came to being whipped, was He beautiful? He was beautiful. Paul of Tarsus, when it came to the whipping post, was he beautiful? He was beautiful. Who is Simon Peter? Who is Paul of Tarsus?

I want you to know she had a passion for her Lord. I repeat it. She had a passion for her Lord. *She loved Him*. On the day that Stephen died, Paul of Tarsus, Saul then, the unbeliever, instigated this thing of whipping Christians. That's when it began. John and Peter had known it previously and rejoiced that they had suffered for the name's sake of their Lord. Wow...the privilege...of being loved. The first 13 stripes are applied to the chest. The next 13 are applied to this side. And the last 13 are applied to this side. Many people who received the 39 stripes died. Many were whipped unconscious. It wasn't easy forgetting...

She had a sense of divinity; she had eyes to see. She could crumble in front of it, and pour back to Him that same love deep He poured out on her. I didn't know this a year ago. And the last year hasn't been the easiest year. And it hasn't been decrepit either. Nothing has topped 1966-69 yet, but I'm braced for it. I want you to know, brothers, that I have always sought to endure the cross, but that is an utter failure. That utterly misses the mark. Trust His love. By it, He won the universe. By it, He was made King of kings and Lord of lords. And by it, she wins the right to become, for she has made her ascent.

I ask you, dear brothers and sisters, to never be the same after today. If we had any sense, we'd look for the cross. We'd look for it under toad stools and rocks. If we had any sense, we would come to the Lord constantly and ask him for the privilege of suffering. And oh, when it came, instead of resisting it or complaining or opening our mouths, we would fall down, and say, “Lord”.

I say again, it is the greatest love story in the universe. And she was like that. Boy, she was beautiful. She stunned the earth with her beauty. The Roman Empire couldn't comprehend. She's going to be that beautiful again, Praise the Lord. Pour out abandoned love for Him.

Have you seen Him? Have you seen her? I believe it's enough. God have mercy on us. Only on a few occasions have I talked of things so life-altering. Now may the mercy of God meet us all. I want you to know you're going to get your chance...I give you a money-back guarantee...to pour out a passion upon your Lord in the presence of the cross. Wow. Lord, what a woman. She is worthy of Jesus Christ.

Lord, what can we say to You? What can we do? We're so unlike this. But You are our Lord, our Master, and our Fiancé. And you ran the race...and You won...and we see you.

It is 6:45. Please use...most of you still have 30 minutes. We're going to dismiss this meeting. I had asked that, if possible, you try to find a place where you can be alone. If not alone, you get that brother you signed up with for that sister. Pick up the Scripture. If you don't know what it is; go get it. But I ask you to start this morning to learn how to crumble in front of Jesus Christ. How to be pressed and so quickly be destroyed. My dear sisters, it is not easy as a weaker vessel to undergo the distress that others put on you. Dear brothers, it is not easy to undergo the pressure that men have put on them. And I have said so many times, probably the hardest for all of you. It's when you have difficulty with me. And when you have difficulty with me, all I want you to know is that it's at those times I wish I had never been born.

I don't enjoy your suffering, but I'm not going to interfere with it. Of course, if I have eyes to see and you have eyes to see, it is a demonstration of passionate love. Brother, sister, go to the Lord. She's going to get beautiful. She is going to be so spectacularly beautiful when she has learned obedience to the cross and a love for it.