



November 2009—*Love That Purifies and Transforms*

Because of his holy love for us, God has purposed to deliver us from our remaining blindness, corruption, and sin and to conform us to the image of his son, Jesus Christ. However, we are often unaware of how he is doing this work and at times may misunderstand and resist it. We may even think of his demands as an unreasonable, onerous intrusion in our lives. C.S. Lewis sheds helpful light on this situation:

Those Divine demands which sound to our natural ears most like those of a despot and least like those of a lover, in fact marshal us where we should want to go if we knew what we wanted. He demands our worship, our obedience, our prostration. Do we suppose that they can do Him any good, or fear, like the chorus in Milton, that human irreverence can bring about ‘His glory’s diminution’? A man can no more diminish God’s glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word ‘darkness’ on the walls of his cell. But God wills our good, and our good is to love Him (with that responsive love proper to creatures) and to love Him we must know Him: and if we know Him, we shall in fact fall on our faces. If we do not, that only shows that what we are trying to love is not yet God—though it may be the nearest approximation to God which our thought and fantasy can attain. Yet the call is not only to prostration and awe; it is to a reflection of the Divine life, a creaturely participation in the Divine attributes which is far beyond our present desires. We are bidden to ‘put on Christ’, to become like God. That is, whether we like it or not, God intends to give us what we need, not what we now think we want. Once more, we are embarrassed by the intolerable compliment, by too much love, not too little.

As Lewis suggests, God loves us far too much to leave us where we are. He has a great plan for us—greater than we can possibly imagine—and is persistently working for our good, even when we cannot see or understand it. Our part is to respond to God’s purifying love by opening our hearts to him in praise and worship, in the study of his word, and in obedience to his will. As we do these things, we will discover over time that we are growing to know God better; and as we know him better, we shall realize that we are coming to love him more; and as we love him more, we will find ourselves desiring to please and obey him in all things. By earnestly seeking God’s face in this way, we will find him progressively revealing himself to us, intensifying our hunger, and making us more like Jesus.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

MATTHEW 5:8 ESV

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996), pp. 46-47.