

THE CHRISTIAN & THE CHURCH (05)

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Introduction

Today we begin our study of the imageries of the church given us to in the Bible. We will not be study every one of the imageries. But I am sure that in the process of our studies we shall make reference to or draw upon most of them. The first imagery I want us to study is the church as the bride of Christ. My prayer is that we will come to these studies with the heart attitude that was found in Cornelius. He said to Peter, “we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.” (*Acts 10:33*).

This is a most remarkable declaration. This is the heart attitude and response to Christ’s Lordship that we must have. We want to know what the Lord Jesus is saying to us in His word. We want to have clear understanding of what He is saying to us. And we want to submit to and obey what He is saying to us. Now, before we take note of a couple points drawn from *Acts 10:33* let me share with you a quote from the church father, **John Chrysostom (347 – 407 A.D.)**. **Chrysostom** was such an eloquent speaker he was described as the man with the golden mouth. One day he said to his congregation : *“I do not desire applause and being well spoken of. I have one request to make — for you to listen to me in quiet attentiveness and to put my advice into practice. This is not a theater. You don’t sit here in order to admire actors and to applaud them. This is a place where you must learn the things of God.”*

Now, what can we learn from this statement that Cornelius made? **Firstly**, given the entire context that led to this gathering together, Cornelius recognized that they were gathered in the presence of God. This was a gathering together in which God was present. You can almost feel the sense of reverence and awe and humble submission to

God that pervaded this gathering together. Here is an awesome fact we need to meditate upon. Here is an awesome fact that must grip our hearts. When we gather to worship, we are gathering in the presence of God. We are gathering together before the face of God and coming face to face with God. You are coming face to face with the God who knows every secret in your heart.

The worship of God is the primary responsibility of His covenant people, the communion of the saints. The most basic promise God has made to His covenant people is : “I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” This promise was made in *Lev.26:12*; repeated in *2Cor.6:16* and repeated again in *Rev.21:3*. The primary response to this covenant promise must be worship in spirit and truth. (*Jn.4:24*). I have been thinking about this matter of worship and making notes as the Holy Spirit brings points to my mind. I have been asking myself : what can we learn from the word of God about worship that is pleasing and not pleasing to the Lord? So far I have jotted down the following points. They are stated negatively with the positive implied.

- 1). Cain’s worship was displeasing to the Lord because he worshipped without a substitutionary sacrifice. (*Gen.4:1-5*).
- 2). The worship of Nadab and Abihu was displeasing to the Lord because they rejected God’s revelation and worshipped based upon their own ideas. (*Lev.10:1-2*).
- 3). King Saul’s worship was rejected because while he professed to be pious he worshipped with a heart of rebellion. (*1Sam.15:22-23*).
- 4). King Jeroboam’s worship was rejected because his worship was based upon pragmatism, a pragmatism that revealed a lack of trust in the Lord and a pragmatism that led directly to idolatry. (*1Kings 12:25-33*).
- 5). King Uzziah’s worship was rejected because his heart was filled with pride. (*2Chron.26:16-21*).
- 6). In *Isa.1:10-17* God rejected Israel’s worship because it was ceremony void of personal and national morality.
- 7). The worship of Jewish husbands were rejected because of their treacherous dealings

with their wives and their marriage covenant. (*Mal.2:13-16*).

- 8). The worship of the Pharisees was rejected because they were drawing near to God without a heart of desire for God. (*Matt.15:8-9*)
- 9). The worship of Ananias and Sapphira was rejected because they desired the praise of men and not the glory of God. (*Acts 5:1-11*).

At the heart of all these examples is this one clear fact : they all failed to recognize and / or give due regard to the fact that in their worship they were coming face to face with God, the God who knows the secrets of every heart. *Psa.44:21* says, “He knows the secrets of the heart.” I trust you have noted also the variety of things that have a negative impact on your worship of God.

Cornelius said, “we are all here present before God to hear.” The *second* point I want you to note is that the verb “**hear**” does not focus on simply hearing. The verb used speaks of hearing with a view to learning (cf. *Jn.6:45*); hearing with a view to understanding (cf. *Jn.8:43*); and hearing with a view to obeying (cf. *Matt.17:5*). In hearing, you give careful attention (cf. *Heb.2:1*) to what is being said because your goal is to obey.

Hearing is an activity that puts important responsibilities directly upon you. Herein lies the reason why those who sleep during the worship of God are sinning against God. They have not gathered in the presence of God to hear. They have gathered in the presence of God to sleep. **John Stott** noted that “*true worship is biblical worship, that is to say, it is a response to the biblical revelation.*” **Stott** added, “*It is the word of God which evokes the worship of God.*” If you desire to worship God Biblically, you must give careful attention to the word of God and pray that you will understand, learn and obey it.

Cornelius said, “we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.” The *third* point I want you to note from is the verb “**commanded.**” The word of God has come to us by the command of the Lord. The

verb “**commanded**” is perfect tense and points to the fact of the abiding permanence of God’s word given to us. When professed Christians want to throw off the commands of the Bible that do not suit their fancies, they say, *“this is a different age we are living in. Those commands are not applicable to us.”* Jesus and the apostles did not take that view. The expression, “**It is written**”, found repeatedly in the N.T., makes reference to the word of God recorded for us in the O.T. “**It is written**” is perfect tense and points to the abiding permanence to what is written.

Cornelius had the right attitude. He recognized and submitted himself to the abiding permanence of God’s word. It is to be noted also that the verb “**commanded**” is a military word. Cornelius was a soldier and used military vocabulary. This tells us that upfront Cornelius was recognizing the Lord as His Commander whom he must obey. Soldiers knew the importance of giving unquestioning obedience to their commanders at all times and especially when they are in battle. Cornelius came to the Lord’s apostle with readiness to obey the Lord. He didn’t come to hear God’s word as a skeptic. He didn’t come to hear God’s word with a wait and see attitude. Brethren, when you gather together for the worship of God in this place, you must come with this attitude, *“I am here present before God to hear all that the Lord has to say to me.”*

Old Testament Imagery.

This brings us to the first metaphor or imagery of the church as the bride of Christ. If I were to give this sermon another title, it will be : **The call to a life-time commitment of loyalty and unrivalled love for Christ.** The imagery of the church as the bride of Christ is rooted in the O.T. imagery of Israel as the bride of Jehovah. The standard was the same in this O.T. imagery as it is in the N.T. imagery. The nation of Israel was called to a life-time commitment of loyalty and unrivalled love to Jehovah.

Let me point out something here that is worthy of our consideration even though it is not the appropriate time for me to work it out for you. **Philip Hughes** correctly noted that

this relationship between the imageries in the Old and New Testaments presents to us evidence regarding the identification of Christ with Jehovah. He noted that *“the Church of the New Testament, which is the bride of Christ, is continuous with the Church of the Old Testament, which is the bride of Jehovah.”* He added that the essence of Paul’s Christology is that Christ, *“who is the Husband of God’s people under the new dispensation, is none other than Jehovah, who is the Husband of His people under the former dispensation, and therefore that He is Himself very God of very God, who became man and suffered for our redemption, and who, as the risen, ascended, and glorified Lord, is the ever-living Bridegroom of those who are His.”* This reminds us of the things I said to you in the previous sermons regarding the church being God’s eternal purpose.

Now as we proceed with this study, I want to emphasize that we will be dealing with truth expressed to us in metaphorical language. The physical and sometimes very explicit imageries found in the metaphor are familiar to us and may make us uncomfortable. But they are used to convey to us a very important spiritual message of what must be the nature of our commitment to Christ, our loyalty to Christ and our love for Christ.

Our study of the O.T. metaphor of the nation of Israel as the bride of Jehovah will be rooted in *Ezekiel 16*. The imageries of Israel’s fall into sin in this chapter are sexually graphic. The Hebrew of this chapter is far more graphic than its English translation. **Christopher Wright** noted that the Hebrew metaphors *“evoke images of the most vulgar sexual depravity and the most horrendous graphic violence.”* As a matter of fact several ancient synagogues took the decision to forbid the reading of *Ezekiel 16* in public. In view of our context I have made the decision to not read this chapter to you today. And in our study I have deliberately avoided explaining some of the graphic Hebrew language used to express the imageries the Lord has set before us. I have sought to stay with explanations that you could be comfortable with and that would get the message home to you. I hope that with the Lord’s help I have accomplished the Biblical goals.

On the other hand I want to press upon you to take time to read *Ezekiel 16*. Read it slowly several times and let the imageries grip you. You need to let the stark contrast of Jehovah's great grace and the sheer ugliness of Israel's sins grip you. You need to enter into and feel the depth of the Lord's great pain over Israel's astounding ingratitude and great wickedness. Let us turn now to our study.

Marriage is a covenant relationship. This is made clear in *Prov.2:17* and *Mal.2:14*. In *Prov.2:17* the adulteress is described as forgetting "the covenant of her God." In *Mal.2:14* the husband is charged with dealing treacherously with the wife of his youth who is his wife by covenant. In *Ezek.16* we find the most detailed description of how Israel became the bride of Jehovah by covenant. The opening section of the chapter emphasizes Jehovah's gracious initiative in His dealings with Israel.

In this chapter Israel is pictured as a female child who was rejected, cast out and left to die. The Lord rescued her and tenderly cared for her and she grew into a beautiful woman. At the right time the Lord betrothed Himself to her. The imagery of betrothal is found in *vs.8*. The cultural expression is, "I spread my skirt over you." *Hos.2:19-20* describes Israel as the Lord's betrothed. Then the Lord entered into a solemn marriage covenant with her. *Vs.8* adds, "I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine', declares the Lord God." *Isa.54:5* describes the Lord as Israel's husband. *Isa.62:5* describes the Lord as the bridegroom and Israel as the bride.

Ezek.16 proceeds to picture the Lord as the most loving, doting and generous husband (*vss.9-13*) who lavished upon his wife gifts of expensive clothing and jewelries and who went all out to make his wife a beauty to be envied. *Ezek.16:13-14* says concerning Israel, "you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty. Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you,' declared the Lord." Note carefully that it was all the Lord's doing. The verbs from *vs.6* emphasize this fact :

The Lord said, “I passed ... I said ... I made ... I spread ... I swore ... I entered ... I anointed ... I clothed ... I adorned ... I bestowed.”

The Lord did not have to love Israel. The descriptions in the imageries in *Ezek.16* show that Israel was both undesirable and undeserving. (*vs.5*). Yet the Lord chose to love Israel. He graciously took that which was abhorred, worthless and rejected in the eyes of the world and made it precious, beautiful and desirable. Why did the Lord love Israel? *Deut.7:6-8* says the Lord set His love on Israel because He loved Israel. The Lord’s love for Israel did not have anything to do with Israel. The Lord’s love for Israel had to do with the Lord.

In *Isa.54:5* the Lord said to Israel, “your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of hosts.” The Lord’s love and loyalty to Israel was unquestionable. And the Lord tolerates no rivals. At the heart of the concept of “**husband**” is the principle of “**lordship**.” *1Pet.3:6* says, “Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.” In making His covenant with Israel, what did the Lord require of Israel? He required from Israel a life-time commitment of loyalty and unrivalled love.

Deut.6:4-5 says, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” *Deut.10:12-13* says, “Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord’s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?”

There are two points that I want you to note in these verses. *Firstly*, we are told “the Lord is one.” The emphasis here is not merely numerical. It also brings to the fore the exclusivity of the relationship that must exist between the Lord and Israel. Just as the marriage covenant established in *Gen.2:23-25* between one man and one woman, so Israel must have a monogamous covenant relationship with the Lord. *Secondly*, this

monogamous covenant relationship with the Lord demands that Israel must love the Lord and serve the Lord exclusively and wholeheartedly, with her whole being. There must be no reserve, no holding back in her love for and service to the Lord.

Anything short of this standard of the total life-time commitment of loyalty and unrivalled love to Jehovah was not acceptable. The problem was that Israel did not simply fall short. Israel manifested an ingratitude that was so shocking and conduct that was so depraved that even her pagan Philistine neighbors became ashamed. (*Ezek.16:27*). Bear in mind that the Philistines were known for their own debaucheries. Israel became unfaithful to Jehovah and plunged into orgies of frenzied harlotries.

In *Ezek.16* the emphasis changed in *vs.15* from what the Lord did to what Israel did in response. There is a marked change from “**I**” to “**you**” : the Lord said, “you trusted ... you played ... you poured ... you made ... you offered ... you slaughtered ... you built ... you spread ... you multiplied.” The Israelites did not take what was theirs to use in their debaucheries. The Lord said they took “My gold ... My silver ... My oil ... My bread ... My children” and used them in their debaucheries and harlotries.

What is this harlotry? As you know, a harlot is a prostitute. In the O.T. a wife who becomes sexually promiscuous is described as behaving as a harlot. What specifically is the harlotry that Israel became guilty of? Turn to *Exod.20:1-6; 34:11-16*. (**read**). God has forbidden the worship of idols and the worship of the true God with the use of idols. God describes any participation in idolatrous activities and / or the worship of idols as harlotry. This harlotry is a religious harlotry. When a professed believer in the Lord Jesus becomes involved in any form of idolatry, that person is behaving as a religious harlot.

A wife’s adultery makes a husband jealous and angry. *Prov.6:34* says, “jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance.” The context of this verse is the wife’s adultery. One writer noted that all love involves jealousy, if its exclusive claim is set aside. (**R.P.Martin; 2Cor.**). The Bible pictures Jehovah as deeply

hurt, jealous and enraged over Israel's religious harlotry. In *Ezek.6:9* the Lord said concerning Israel, "I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts." *Ezek.16:43* says Israel's harlotry enraged the Lord.

In *Lev.17:7* the Lord said to the Israelites, "They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot." In *Deut.31:16-17* we read, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land.... Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day....' Not long after the death of Joshua we are told that the Israelites "played the harlot after other gods.... They quickly turned aside from the way...." (*Judg.2:17*). Israel spurned and turned away from her covenant marriage with Jehovah and became a religious harlot. She worshipped at the altar of every false god she could find. To use the marriage metaphor, Israel turned away from her exclusive and unrivalled love for Jehovah and gave her love to every pagan lover she could find.

This imagery of Israel as Jehovah's bride who had become a religious harlot is seen very clearly in the book of Hosea. The prophet Hosea was commanded to go and marry a harlot. Hosea married Gomer. We read in *Hos.1:2-3*, "When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, 'Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.' So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son." Hosea's marriage to Gomer, her unfaithfulness to Hosea and her continued pursuit of harlotry was the physical display of God's message to Israel. Israel had become a harlot in her relationship with Jehovah. This imagery of Israel as the bride of Jehovah who had become a harlot is also found in *Jer.3:1-13*.

Ezekiel 16 contains the most graphic and detailed description of Israel's unfaithfulness to Jehovah, her pursuit of other lovers and her frenzied harlotries. **Christopher Wright** wrote in his commentary, "*The most repeated word in [Ezekiel 16] is zana, to engage in prostitution, and the related nouns. Again, the use of this term for*

*Israel's worship of other gods was not new, but the sheer offensiveness of calling Israel a harlot, whore or prostitute some **twenty-one times** in this chapter, especially with sexually explicit verbal graphics, is breathtaking. When combined with the repeated phrase that in all their promiscuity they were never "satisfied" (vss.28-29), it is clear that Ezekiel wants it to be very clear that Israel does not stand accused of a single act of adultery, but of prolonged, addictively repeated, insatiable promiscuity with multiple partners. It is a terrible indictment of unrestrained nymphomaniacal adventures."*

It is of important interest to note that *Ezek.16* is framed as a prosecutor's speech in a court of law. The Lord was making His case and making Israel's guilt very clear before proceeding with judgment. The Lord's patience had come to an end. Israel's adulterous ways began with the making of the golden calf (*Exod.32:1-10*). With few breaks in between, Israel's adulterous addiction to idolatry would continue for several hundred years. Israel's religious harlotry followed every horrible practice found among the pagan nations. This included the most horrible practice of burning their children as sacrifices to their idols. Finally, the Lord sent the Assyrians to destroy and deport the northern kingdom of Israel. Later on the Lord sent the Babylonians against the southern kingdom of Judah. In this Babylonian invasion and deportation, the city of Jerusalem and the temple were also destroyed and burnt to the ground. For all practical purposes the Lord's covenantal marriage to the Israelites had ended.

New Testament Imagery.

Let us turn our attention now to the metaphor of church as the bride of Christ. This metaphorical imagery is hinted at in the gospels. In *Matt.9:14-15* Jesus used the imagery of a bridegroom to describe Himself. In *Matt.22:1-14* Jesus told a parable in which He compared the kingdom of heaven to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. The son in the parable is Jesus. In *Matt.25:1-13* we have the parable of the ten

virgins. The bridegroom in the parable is the Lord Jesus. The five wise virgins represent the church. In *Jn.3:29* John the Baptist described Jesus as the bridegroom who has the bride.

Now let go to *2Cor.11:1-3*. (**read**). Paul's metaphor here is clearly rooted in the O.T. metaphor of Jehovah's betrothal and covenant marriage to Israel. Firstly, we must consider the question : **What is a betrothal?** The verb has the primary meaning, **to fit together in harmony**. This meaning says a whole lot about what must be the nature of a betrothal and a marriage. Harmony must pervade them, a harmony that preserves the joining together from falling apart.

A betrothal is a formal marriage contract that is legal and binding. The betrothed young woman remained in her father's house until her wedding day, which normally took place about a year later. It is only after the wedding that the marriage was consummated. On the other hand, the betrothal contract was such that the betrothed couple were legally husband and wife. A betrothal could only be dissolved by death or a formal divorce. If the man died, the betrothed young woman was regarded as a widow. The betrothed young woman passed from her father's authority to the authority of her husband. But until the wedding took place it was the father's responsibility to preserve his betrothed daughter's purity and ensure her fidelity to her husband.

Deut.22:23-24 says a man who has sex with a betrothed woman "has violated his neighbor's wife." The penalty for this was death. In *Matt.1:18* we are told that Mary was betrothed to Joseph. When Joseph discovered that she was pregnant, he planned to "send her away secretly". He planned to divorce her secretly because he wanted to spare her the public disgrace. It was unlikely that Mary would have been stoned to death as prescribed in the O.T. But the possibility was there if there was an angry reaction from the public.

Paul's role in the passage before us is a bit complicated. Paul is a member of the church and a part of the bride of Christ. Yet, at the same time he sees himself as the father of the

bride. Paul's role is two-fold. Firstly, his role is evangelistic and it works in the creation or birthing of the bride and the betrothal of the bride to her husband. Secondly, his role is pastoral and he must work to preserve the purity and fidelity of the bride until she is fully given over to her husband on her wedding day.

Paul's role has been handed down to the pastors of the church. The creation or birthing of the bride and the betrothal process must continue in the work of evangelism until it is finally completed. Pastors must ensure that this evangelism is actively taking place in the church. Secondly, pastors are responsible to preserve the purity and fidelity of the bride until she is given over to her husband on her wedding day.

Paul said to the Corinthians, "I betrothed you." "**You**" is plural. The entire Corinthian church is being regarded corporately as the bride of Christ and as representative of what all believers are as the bride of Christ. When a young woman was betrothed to a man the implication was that she was pure, that she was committed to the one man and that her faithfulness to that one man will be preserved. Neither she nor her father would allow any rivals to court her. The encouragement of such rivalry was not tolerated.

Conversion to Christ brings you into the bride of Christ. Conversion makes you pure and righteous. Your sins are taken away and you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the language of Paul, you are betrothed to the heavenly Bridegroom as a "**pure virgin**". You are betrothed to one Husband. Christ's choice of you, love for you, loyalty to you, and commitment to you are unquestionable. He didn't have to choose you nor love you. In His eyes there was nothing about you that was deserving or desirable. Because of sin and the horrible filthiness sin brings you deserved to be abhorred. Yet He chose you, He loves you, and He is loyal to you and totally committed to you.

What must be your response? Your loyalty to Him must be undivided. Your purity for Him must remain inviolable. Your commitment to Him must be steadfast. Your love for Him must be unrivalled. The expression "**one husband**" points to the exclusivity of the covenant marriage and relationship you must have with Christ. Just as God-ordained

marriage is monogamous, in the same way the church's and, by implication, your covenant marriage and relationship to Christ must be monogamous.

Paul said the goal is to present you to Christ as a "pure virgin". For this reason, he said to the Corinthians, he is jealous for them with a godly jealousy. He is jealously watching over them to preserve their purity and fidelity because he is aware there are many rivals in this world who wants to deceive them and lead them astray from their exclusive devotion to Christ.

Let us deal with this issue of rivalry and close our study on that note. Next Lord's Day we will deal with the other related passages. Your love for Christ must be a faithful, loyal, committed, unrivalled love. What does this mean at the practical level? Jesus said in *Matt.10:37-38*, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

In a marriage, there is a leaving and cleaving because one's spouse is loved more than mother and father and brothers and sisters. If parents and siblings seek to become rivals for the love you have for your spouse, you have to say a firm "no" to parents and siblings. If you can't say a firm "no" then your love for your spouse is not an unrivalled love. In a marriage, husband and wife must love each other more than their children. If children seek to become rivals for the love you have for spouse, you have to say a firm "no" to the children. If you can't say a firm "no" then your love for your spouse is not an unrivalled love. If you do not have unrivalled love for your spouse, you are a candidate for adultery.

The bride of Christ must leave and cleave to Christ and must love Christ first and foremost. Parents, siblings and children must not be allowed to become rivals for the love you have for Christ. Christ does not tolerate the presence of rivals. Your unrivalled love for your spouse must be the earthly illustration of the greater unrivalled love you have for Christ. And if even your spouse attempts to become a rival for the love you

have for Christ, you must say a firm “**no**” to your spouse. As a matter of fact your love for your own life must not be allowed to become a rival for the love you have for Christ. If loving Christ with unrivalled love means you have to die for Him, then you must die for Him. He died for you because of His love for you.

Rivalry for the love you have for Christ can come in many shapes and forms. The general warning is given in *1Jn.2:15*, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world.” Demas did not obey this command. He allowed the world to compete for his love and the world won. He fell in love with the world. And Paul wrote with great sadness, “Demas, having love this present world, has deserted me.” (*2Tim.4:10*). Anything or person in this world that seeks to supplant your love for Christ, that seeks to supplant Christ’s first place in your life, that seeks to supplant your devotion to Christ, that seeks to supplant your commitment to Christ, that seeks to supplant your faithfulness to Christ, that seeks to supplant your loyalty to Christ, that is a rival. If you do not have unrivalled love for Christ, you are a candidate for spiritual adultery.

Another word for this rivalry is idolatry. And as we saw, the idolatry of the bride of Jehovah was described as religious harlotry, as spiritual adultery. James wrote, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?” (*Jas.4:4*). Note carefully that James did not say, “**You adulterers**” or “you adulterers and adulteresses.” He used the feminine noun, “**adulteresses**”. James was addressing people who were professing to be the bride of Christ and making it clear to them that in loving the world and allowing the world to become a rival for their love for Christ is the idolatry of adultery.

Paul said in *2Cor.5:14*, “the love of Christ controls us.” Let me ask you as I close : do you have an unrivalled love for Christ, a love that controls you, a love that dictates your whole life? Or is your professed love for Christ defiled by the adulteries and harlotries you are committing with your idols? Your idol may be a person, the things of this world, the mindset of this world and the so-called glamour the world offers you. Your idol may be your compromises with false religions and their gods and goddesses. Let us

examine our hearts and ask ourselves : do we truly love Christ with exclusive and unrivalled love?