Drawn to the Character of the Lord Jesus

It's easy to notice that in an election campaign, the people promoting a candidate present him in the most glowing light possible to persuade people to vote for him. They do it through billboards, on the radio, on television…

The candidate crafts speeches with the most convincing promises he can make, to win over as many voters as possible.

It's done this way because we were created with discernment, with the capacity to choose. When we greatly admire someone, a desire to act, to make decisions, is set off in us.

No candidate on the campaign trail will call on us to vote for him by using threats, because no one would think well of him or vote for him. If a person is drawn to the promises of a candidate who is very convincing, and believes he is sincere in what he promises, that person will act accordingly: he will think highly of him and choose him over the others.

If, besides the promises he makes, this candidate also lives a beautiful life, then even though he calls no one to imitate his way of life, there will still be some people who, out of admiration, will want to imitate him. That is how we were created, with this capacity.

When we are drawn to someone, we admire them and are willing to support them, and when we admire them with all our heart, there will be people among us who want to become like that person. (We can see this desire to imitate in young people, this wish to be like certain music or film stars, in how they dress, how they talk…)

When it comes to the salvation of the soul, things happen in a similar way. God uses His messengers to present His plan for our lives, with the aim of persuading us to choose His offer of salvation.

To get people to vote for him, a candidate promises them all sorts of benefits, without asking them to become like him and live as he does. But the Lord Jesus, besides promising us eternal life, also offers us the possibility of becoming like Him, of walking together with Him in His ways, living a perfect life. He calls us not only to appreciate Him for what He has done for us, but to be like Him. He calls us to fall in love with Him, and for this He shows us the beauty of His character, which is perfect. ("And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32)

God does not call us to appreciate Him merely because He offers us an eternal Kingdom with streets of gold, or because He saves us from hell, since that will not make us fall in love with Him, nor make us want to follow Him so as to be like Him.

He shows us His ways, which are righteous; He reveals His radiant beauty to us so that we may be drawn, so that we may be filled with admiration, so that love may be kindled in us. ("All his ways are judgment." Deuteronomy 32:4)

Only in this way can we love Him with all our heart. Only in this way will we long to walk in His ways and to have the beauty that He has. ("The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." Psalm 50:1–2)

That is why, in His love for the crown of His creation, God uses His messengers to speak to us about the Lord Jesus, to show us the traits of character of His heart. His disciples are sent to describe the image of God to us, to show us the beauty of His heart and to draw us to Him by His perfect beauty.

No one can be drawn by His beauty if they have not heard about Him and do not see the traits of His heart, if they do not know His ways, the way He is. ("And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Romans 10:14; "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John 6:44)

If we are drawn by the beauty of His character, which is perfect, we will admire Him and love Him with all our heart; only then will the desire be stirred in us to have the same traits of character that He has. ("I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please." Song of Solomon 8:4)

If we were only called to repentance so as not to end up in hell and so as to walk on streets of gold, without being shown the beauty of the Lord's heart, if no one ever told us that His purpose is for us to have His traits of character, then we must be careful, because those who brought us that message brought us a false, incomplete gospel. They were not sent by God. If we received such a gospel, we have been deceived by Satan.

Let's be honest with ourselves: what gospel were we given? Were there people who preached to us that if we did not repent, we would end up in eternal hell? Did they teach us to appreciate Him, to be grateful to Him, only for what He did for us on the cross? Or were they messengers of God who showed us the beauty of the Lord's heart? Have I been drawn by the traits of His character? Has love been awakened in us, and have we longed to have the same beautiful traits that He has?

God draws us with all His beauty and will make all the beauty of His heart pass before us. Just as He showed Moses the beauty of His heart, so He will show it to us as well. He will make all His goodness pass before you. (Exodus 33:17) He does this so that we may fall in love with the traits of His heart, so that love may be awakened in us.

David's burning desire (which must be the desire of everyone in love with the Lord) was to dwell all his life in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord. ("One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD." Psalm 27:4)

If we come to God out of fear of hell, we have not experienced the shining of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ("But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light

of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Corinthians 4:3–4)

Every teaching (every commandment) in the Gospel has a trait of the Lord Jesus hidden within it; it holds hidden within it the perfect beauty of His character. When we look at His ways, at His commandments, we are in fact looking at the beauty of Christ, who is the image of God.

His commandments must be a delight to us, because they represent Him. ("And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved." Psalm 119:47; "Thy commandments are my delights." Psalm 119:143)

That is why the Lord Jesus says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments…" (John 14:15). In other words, whoever loves Me also loves My commandments and finds delight in them, because My commandments express My character; they show what I am like.

No one will be able to admire Him and love Him with all their mind out of fear of being punished with eternal hell, but only if they are drawn by the radiance of the Lord, by the radiance of His Word. Only then is the burning desire to be like Him set alight. Only in this way can the purpose for which we were created be fulfilled: to be like the Lord Jesus, our Bridegroom.

Only when we are truly drawn by the beauty of the Lord's heart will we be moved to imitate Him and to long to have a heart like His.

If someone shows us the beauty of the Lord and we are drawn to Him, the result will be love. To illustrate, our relationship must be like that of an engaged couple who are drawn to each other, where there is wholehearted love.

If we admire and are drawn by the beauty of the Lord Jesus' traits, we will want them for ourselves as well, and that is the starting point. ("I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." Song of Solomon 5:8)

A person in love will always delight in the words spoken by the one they admire and love. ("My soul failed when he spake." Song of Solomon 5:6; "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments." Psalm 119:20)

If we did not begin here, if we are not drawn by the beauty of His heart, if His commandments and His ways are not our delight, if we have loved Him only for His promises, then the new life has not begun. ("No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John 6:44)

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