The Pilgrim's Quest

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and ***confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims*** *on the earth. For they that say such things* ***declare plainly that they seek a country.***" (Heb. 11:13,14)

Pilgrim's Quest Bible Church
Pastor Garry E. Huff

The Call to a Christ-Like Love

"The Lord's Ministry of Love to the People"

"... the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
(Matthew 20:28)

It was God's Sovereign choice to select fallen, sinful man as the object of His great, vast, and deep love. It was God the Father's choice. It was God the Son's choice. It was God the Holy Spirit's choice. Man did nothing to merit this choice, neither did he deserve to be selected.

Jesus, the Son of God, was sent down from the glorious realm of heaven to live among men. The Lord Jesus would be heaven's messenger, heaven's advocate, and heaven's provision to reveal the fact that God is love and that He loves mankind. The Lord humbled himself as God and clothed himself in a human fleshly form to convey what God had in His heart. His purpose was singular - to bring salvation to man, thus revealing God's love in the physical realm of time, space, and history. There has been no other creature that has received such appointed special attention or privilege as man.

After the water baptism at 30 years old, the Lord began His ministry to others for about three and one-half years. These years were the visible expression of the heart of God to man. The four Gospels are replete of the life and ministry among the people as He came to minister to others.

Jesus "came unto his own," that is, His own race of people. His people were the Jews - God's chosen people. The Jews were a proud race - the offspring of Abraham. They looked down on all other races. The "Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans," because they were a mixed, mongrel race. The Romans were despised as their rulers and conquerors. The Greeks, likewise, were to be ignored since they were outside of God's covenant with Abraham. And yet, the Lord came to be a minister. He would say, "He must needs go through Samaria" to meet a Samaritan women at a well so that she might know that Jesus was the Christ. A Roman centurion desired to speak to Jesus because he had a servant "dear to him" that was severely ill. All the Lord needed to do was "speak the word only" and his servant would be healed. The Lord commended the Centurion's faith and his servant was healed at "the selfsame hour." A Greek woman who was from Syrophoenicia sought the Lord to heal her daughter who was greatly vexed with a devil. The Lord also commended her faith and her daughter was "made whole from that very hour." Although Jesus came to His own race, He did not show partiality or favoritism. He demonstrated that the love of God extended beyond the sphere of His own race.

Among the many miracles of the Lord, His first was at a wedding in Cana. This was a joyous time, a time of happiness, a time of rejoicing. But this glad occasion was suddenly interrupted because they ran out of refreshment. This would cast a dark shadow over the pleasantness of this delightful event. But this moment was only brief as the Lord turned the water into the most refreshing wine that had been served. The Lord did not desire to draw attention away from the wedding party, so the miracle was done in a quiet manner known only to a few. What a heart of love was expressed by the Lord for this marriage celebration!

The Lord Jesus revealed His love in many miracles of healing to various people with all manner of diseases. One such was a leper who approached the Lord face to face and knelt before Him. Luke, the physician, indicates that this man was "full of leprosy" revealing an advanced stage of the disease. According to Levitical Law such a person had to live alone and avoid all contact with others. A covering had to be worn over the upper lip as he cried out publicly "unclean, unclean." No one was allowed to touch such a diseased person. Dare this leper approach the Son of God? Dare he urgently beg for cleansing? He believed the

Lord had the power to heal him, but would it be the desire of the Lord to willfully cure him? Instead of calling out "unclean, unclean" he speaks to the Lord, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The Gospel of Mark says that Jesus was moved with compassion, and no doubt brokenhearted at the toll this disease had taken on this leper's body. With pity and love the Lord said, "I will; be thou clean." At that very instant of the words of the Lord the man was cleansed. The Lord "stretched out his hand" and touched him. One writer states, "Our Lord did not touch the leper to cleanse him, but to show him and the people around, that he was cleansed of his leprosy ... The first touch of a human hand the leper experienced was the gentle touch of the Son of God." For years this leper knew nothing of a loving, kind, tender touch of another human being until Jesus stretched out His hand to him. Oh, what a loving expression by the Son of God to a newly cleansed leper!

The occupation of tax collector was certainly a despised occupation by the Jews. The Romans often hired Jews to work along the commercial trade routes to levy taxes from their own Jewish countrymen. These "publicans" were hated and despised so greatly that it is believed they were excluded from gathering in the synagogue - labeled as "sinners indeed." When Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, Matthew immediately left his lucrative position as tax collector. He, then, invited his fellow tax collectors to a "great feast" at his house with the attendance of Jesus. This was rare for the "publicans and sinners" to have a fellow Jew sit down and eat with them. Matthew wanted to introduce them to his Saviour. As a result, there were many who followed Jesus.

There is much to say about the ministry of love to the people the Lord met. There are those He raised from the dead, those He forgave of their sins, children He held in His arms, the multitude He fed who were in need of nourishment. There was a demoniac who lived among tombs who being delivered was observed sitting, clothed, and in his right mind. As John wrote in his Gospel, "And there are so many other things Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Jesus not only wanted to prove that He was the Christ, but that this proof included God's great love. Oh, what a great God who loves all mankind!

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one,
Lay down Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
Thee living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of life I'll walk,
Till traveling days are done.

Horatius Bonar

Verses for Thought of Heart:

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans also? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Mt. 5:46-48)

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (I Jn. 3:18)

"Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Dt. 10:19)