**True Love is single-minded**

Text: Psalm 119:113-120

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**Scriptures:** 1 John 4:16-21; Psalm 119:113-120 {Samekh}

**Songs Chosen:** [SttL] 116, 503, 467, 440, 513

**Series:** Psalm 119

**Theme:** The contrast between divided, half-hearted loyalty and complete devotion to YWHW’s Law

**Proposition:** Love Christ with your whole mind and heart!

**Introduction**

True Love is single-minded. In marriage ’*the two shall become one flesh*’, united in love. An elder is to be a one-woman man, a wife is to be a one-man woman! So it is with the love of God for His people; it is not divided, but single-minded, wholehearted love.

God only has one love. For one people. He expresses this in these words from Hosea 2:19-20 "*I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD*”.

The response of God’s people is likewise to be a single-minded, wholehearted love for Him. "*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might*” (Deut 6:4-5).

Our text today is taken from the ‘S’ {samekh} section of acrostic Psalm 119. The beginning word sets the theme for this part of the psalm: In the original Hebrew language of the Old Testament it is the word translated ‘double-minded’ which meansdisunited, divided in heart and mind, conflicting, schismatic, fickle, changeable, inconsistent. This word conveys the same idea as when James writes about “*a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways*” (James 1:8).

Remember the lukewarm church of Laodicea; to be spat out like a mouthful of tepid water (Rev 3:16). Or perhaps you’ve read Pilgrims Progress and recall John Bunyan’s ‘Mr Facing Both Ways’. We might refer to such a person as a ‘fence-straddler’, ‘one foot in both camps.

Here in the Samekh section there is a stark contrast for our psalmist: “*I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law*” (v113). We are going to look at the two parts of these opposing allegiances: Firstly, divided loyalty to God. Secondly, Undivided love for God

1. **Double-minded disloyalty**

The psalmist hates the double-minded, those of divided loyalty, because they reject God’s sovereign reign, although they claim to serve Him. He wants nothing to do with such fickle-minded people: “*Depart from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commandments of my God*” (v115). Literally ‘*turn away from me you evil/bad ones - you who oppose good*’. These evildoers are the enemies who have plagued our psalmist:

* + *“princes sit plotting against me” (23)*
  + *“the insolent smear me with lies” (69)*
  + *“the insolent have dug pitfalls for me” (85)*
  + *“the wicked lie in wait to destroy me” (95)*
  + *“the wicked have laid a snare for me” (110)*

They are not merely enemies of the psalmist, they are enemies of God, for they are those who do evil. They are the cunning/treacherous/deceitful (119). They are the double-minded who have “*gone astray from your statues*” (118). They are those who **once** walked according to God’s Word, but have now deliberately gone astray. Here is the most troubling aspect of our text: these evildoers are not pagan Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites or Amorites. They were Israelites. They were ‘within the camp’ of Israel.

Today, it would be said of these evil, deceitful, double-minded unstable people -they are in the church! They are like Hymenaeus and Alexander who suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith (1 Tim 1:19). Like Philetus who swerved from the truth (2 Tim 2:17). Like Demas who deserted the Apostle Paul who was “*in loved with this present world*” (2 Tim 4:10). They are those ungodly persons in the church who ‘*pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*’ (Jude 1:4).

Half-hearted loyalty to God sounds better than no loyalty; at least a person is 50% of the way there! But no. Double-minded ‘loyalty’ is no loyalty at all. It is disloyalty. A man who says “I am faithful to my wife most of the time” is not faithful at all. A woman who says “I seek to obey some of the commands in Scripture, but the ones I disagree with I ignore” is not a godly woman at all. A child who does what he/she is told some of the time, when it pleases them, does not honour their parents, and is not obedient

The ‘double-minded’ are those who are like two different people in one body. They could be called ‘spiritually schizophrenic’. Like the double-hearted generation who wanted to go to the promised land, but also wanted to go back to Egypt. Remember after they saw the great power of God unleashed in the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea, they ‘believed in the Lord’ (Exo 14:31). Yet then they grumbled at his provision of free nutritious manna: "*We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic*” (Num 11:5). This double-minded generation who left Egypt never entered the promised land, but perished in the wilderness

Please understand: The double-minded are **not** those who have moments of doubt. Many of us suffer at times from diminished assurance of faith. Our psalmist does not hate the tender children of God! God loves to have us come to him in our weakness. Remember the father of boy possessed by evil spirit whose confession of genuine faith was "*I do believe; help my unbelief*".

In contrast to those with weak faith, the double-minded have ‘*a soul divided between faith in Christ and in the world*’. Jesus said: "*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth*” (Matt 6:24). Christ reserved His greatest condemnation for those within the covenant community; religious leaders who worked hard to look good on the outside, but were rotten to the core inside: "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness*” (Matt 23:27). Jesus didn’t call them ‘double-minded’, but that is what they were.

What is the fate of those who do evil? Who do not love God? Our psalmist accurately knows that the justice of God will always prevail. Look at verse 119 “*All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross, therefore I love your testimonies*”. Dross is the base metal separated from pure by a refining process. The wicked are like chaff that the wind drives away (Ps 1:4). God rejects those who reject Him. Divided loyalty is no loyalty at all. It is the heart of the traitor, the turn coat. Like Judas who kissed Christ so that he could betray him. Like the lukewarm love of the Laodicean church. Just as water flowed into the city from nearby hot springs and was tepid and nauseating when it arrived.

What is the solution for divided loyalty to Christ the Head of the church? Apathy or indifference? Certainly not! Despair? – No! Christ offers a much better way: hope and restoration. “*Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me*” (Rev 3:19-20).

How is your devotion to Christ today? Cold, lukewarm, Hot? If cold, come to Christ! If lukewarm – repent and be zealous for your Lord. If hot – praise God! Hot was the temperature of our psalmist’s love. His was a single-minded loyalty to His Lord, which brings us to our second point.

1. **Single-minded love**

In contrast to the double-minded, the psalmist is one who loves the Law of his God. He is like Caleb of whom God said, **“***because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me* ***fully,*** *I will bring (him) into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it*” (Num 14:24). Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. The only two single-minded men of the generation who left Egypt, who then entered the promised land

Our psalmist is like them. He declares: “*I love your law*”. To love the Word of God is to love God, the law Giver. To love God is to love Christ Jesus His Son, the Living Word. Jesus made the connection between love for Himself and love for the law when he said: "*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments*” (John 14:15).

Jesus also teaches us that when we love Him with an undivided love, the world will hate us just as our Saviour was first hated by this same world. For example in the ‘high-priestly prayer’"*I have given them your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*” (John 17:14). Satan can work well with, and within, the double-minded, but He attacks those who have an undivided love for God, because that very love shows that they are loved by God. So we see in our text that the psalmists single-minded commitment to the Covenant Lord makes him a target for the enemies of God, yet his faith in the power of God, whose word he loves, provides him with prayerful access to help: v116 “*Uphold me according to your promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope!*” v117 “*Hold me up, that I may be safe and have regard for your statutes continually!*”.

Heartfelt prayers of petition are the outflowing of a single-minded love for God. The single-minded believer knows that his/her only help is in the name of the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth. The one who loves God with an undivided love knows that God can help when no one else can. So here we see here in this section of Psalm 119 confident supplication and trusting dependence upon God. Notice how personal these prayers are: ‘me’, ‘I’, but notice also that in his approach to God he is deeply humble and reverent: “*My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments*” (v120). Literally ‘my flesh bristles/stands erect’. We sometimes say, “the hair on the back of my head stood up’. The psalmist knows that his God is a ‘consuming fire’ (Heb 12:29). When we love the law of God, we love holiness. We love purity, justice, truth and righteousness.

When we love God with undivided love, we see ourselves clearly as the prophet Isaiah did. *"Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."* (Isa 6:5). Today we don’t see God in a vision, but in His Word, in Christ – who is the image of the invisible God. When your flesh trembles in reverent fear of God, when you realise that the One we love is coming in judgement against your sin, when you realise that your love is not completely undivided. Then when you come to Christ with your tainted love, He receives you because His love for our heavenly Father is undivided and we receive the benefit of the perfect intensity and purity of His love. Then His love, being completed in us takes away fear: *“By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us”.* (1 John 4:17-19)

Brothers and sisters, Christ loves us with perfect, undivided, single-minded love. "*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends*” (John 15:13). So then will you love Christ with your whole heart? Love His Word, love to obey His commandments. Love the altogether lovely One with all your heart, mind and strength.

AMEN.