The Heart of God

Wayne Waibel – 06/05/2022

Our passage from Genesis seems at first blush to be a story demonstrating the wrath of Almighty God. Upon further review an alternative interpretation begins to surface. If you examine this episode deep enough, you'll find some very current dynamics at play.

What if God was not chastising the people for building a tower, but actually blessing them? It's no stretch to accept that God's wisdom is far greater than our own. It's also entirely believable that the Father has some very specific designs on what course the world is to follow.

This action could be explained by - God, upon seeing the efforts of humankind – changed the course of their efforts. Cultural diversity is the consequence of God's design for the world, not the result of God's punishment of the world.

It could be argued that Babel is the point of origin for the world's different cultures. Left to our own devices, we are unlikely to create such diversity, so God intervened and set us back on the path of His design. Sometimes we need to push ourselves outside of our own understanding.

We are all just passing through this life, limited in the amount of good and evil we can do, but also given the priceless opportunity for God to work in us for His glory. Our business in life is less to make something of ourselves than to find something worth doing and losing ourselves in it.

Unfortunately, you really have to dig deep these days in order to find inspired leadership, or solid examples of the life of love Jesus is talking about. Those kinds of things don't trend or even get exposed on either social media or the news in general. That kind of stuff is simply not sensational. It doesn't warrant coverage. It is out there, but again – you have to dig deep.

I'll give you an example. In the remote Arctic Svalbard Archipelago, there is what is referred to as the Doomsday Seed Bank. This vault houses every seed known on the planet and would be used in the event of a global crisis to restore the earth's resources.

And this little venture is funded privately by, among others, Monsanto, the Rockefeller Foundation, and a computer geek by the name of Bill Gates. They don't go around bragging about it, but they are certainly getting the job done.

It's as though the vast majority of what used to be considered news outlets are more concerned with turning profits then providing the kind of actual news that can result in a tiny bit of encouragement seeping into the fabric of empire.

The real problem these days is we're so conditioned to being spoon-fed our information that we're out of practice when it comes to doing our own research.

Philip was having the same problem with perception, which is what prompted him to ask Jesus to show them the Father. It's no wonder we can sometimes lose sight of the divine that is all around us. It happened to the disciples, and they were hanging with Jesus!

The Lord needs to come down now and again to infuse a little diversity into our lives so that we can love Him more fully. The irony in all of this is that we spend so much time and energy trying to make a name for ourselves in this world; forgetting completely that our name is already written in the Book of Life.

We attempt some pretty crazy stunts – like building a tower that can reach to heaven. The good news in all this is that we have already been called. The good Lord is on our side and grants us grace. He was with the disciples to the tune of granting them His peace and His grace. They didn't earn it – they didn't even ask for it, and still it was freely given.

Additionally, Christ promised that if they (and we) ask anything in His name, He will deliver. What a thing to believe. And all He ever asks of us is that we keep His commandments, and there's really only the two – love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love one another as Jesus loves us.

The thing is, we have a connection with Jesus. The connection we have with Jesus is what we call faith, and it is not based on sight. In that sense, seeing is not believing, rather, seeing obviates the necessity of believing.

So when Philip asks Jesus to "show us the Father," Christ's response is both predictable and measured. "He who has seen me has seen the Father." In some ways, it's easier for us to believe having never seen either the Father or the Son.

We consider the seventh Sunday after Easter, Pentecost Sunday commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and all followers of the Way. With that comes the charge to do something about it. It doesn't have to be anything dramatic or even noteworthy. It's like a discipline of sorts.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." What He is talking about is a much more intimate form of peace. The kind of peace that flows from the Father – through the Son, and manifests in the Holy Spirit that rests within us. This kind of peace is so much more than simply the absence of hostilities.

We are such a blessed people. We not only enjoy the bounty of this great land, but the love and abiding affection of our heavenly Father through His most gracious Son. And again – we have these things not because we deserve them or have earned them. They are not attained. A God who delights in the joy of His children freely gives them.

I feel like I'm continuously repeating myself, and that's probably because the message is generally the same. I hate to belabor it, especially with you folks, because you so thoroughly live it every single day. When we talk about the Holy Spirit descending upon you it's a forgone conclusion. You, my friends, embody that which is right in the world.

Countless others can benefit from the life of love you so ably demonstrate day in and day out. The Holy Spirit rests upon you and gives you peace, and you – each of you – personify the charge let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. For you – communion assumes difference – not uniformity. Full in the knowledge that therein lies the Heart of God.   Amen.