

August 21, 2015

THE FATHER, OUR FATHER, AND MY FATHER

During my wife Brenda's leading of the communion recently she listed a number of names and adjectives describing the character and the person of both God and Christ. These words helped build a clear picture of God Himself that is to some degree, trying to know the unknowable. Orthodox Judaism will not even write His name, let alone speak it because of the reverence and holiness that they feel surrounds the revelation of God.

Jesus tells us in the prayer He shared with His disciples; "hallowed be your name" (NIV); "Your name must at once be made holy" (OMB); "We honour your holy name" (LB); "May your name be honoured" (PHILLIPS).

In the light of such awe, God has reached out to His creation by revealing Himself in one of the most personal of ALL relationships; our Father. This revelation of the role and character of God is so important that Jesus revealed Him as the first and ultimate Father when He said; "And you should not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your heavenly FATHER." (OMB) He is the true model of the word FATHER just as Jesus is the perfect model of the SON.

This is wonderful news for us because it establishes not only the role He has but also the person God is, how He relates to us and how we are to relate to Him. David understood this when he wrote; "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth his children them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." (KJV) We can take great encouragement from this word picture, especially when we feel we have failed and sinned so badly, even like the prodigal son or the self righteous brother.

Jesus talks about Him as the author of all life, both physical and spiritual; "THE FATHER has life in himself and has granted his SON to have life in himself" (LB); even in the final judgement Jesus ascribes his submission to Him; "But I pass no judgement without consulting THE FATHER." (LB) He is the eternal FATHER, THE TRUE FATHER OF EVERYTHING. In this sense, He is the FATHER of all living, saved and unsaved even though by unbelief we make Satan our father.

To confirm his role as Messiah, Jesus makes this statement; "I refer to the miracles I do and have been assigned to me by THE FATHER and they prove that THE FATHER has sent me." (LB) To endorse His Sonship Jesus states to His disciples; "I am the way, yes, the truth and the life, no one can get to THE FATHER except by means of me." (LB) and so; "To welcome me is to welcome THE FATHER who sent me" (LB)

Of course we will sometimes be plagued by disbelief as was Philip; "Sir, show us THE FATHER and we will be satisfied..." (LB) Jesus replies; "Anyone who has seen me has seen THE FATHER." Paul tells us that Jesus is; "The image of the invisible God" (NIV) and the writer to the Hebrews states; "This SON, radiance of the Glory of God, flawless expression of the nature of God" (PHILLIPS) is the answer to Philip's question. Jesus shows us fully what THE FATHER is like. Look no further than Jesus and interpret the Old Covenant and scriptures through the words of Jesus. This will help avoid issues relative to following Old Covenant rules and processes. "JESUS AT THE CENTRE OF IT ALL"

What is thrilling is that Jesus also reveals that God is OUR FATHER and makes the relationship both personal and collective. When He tells us to pray; "OUR FATHER who is in heaven" He's saying that God is not just *THE FATHER* but *OUR FATHER*. When we do that we are recognising that as believers we have ONE common FATHER and that makes us family, all brothers and sisters. Although this is commonly known within the church universal it should also be our practice. Having stated that point I am reminded that siblings do not always agree

and act like family and therefore sometimes OUR FATHER has to crack a few heads if we are to be united so that we can become the spotless bride for his Son.

Some feel we might be disrespectful by addressing God as our "FRIEND" but God now calls us his SONS, and loves as much as he loves THE SON. You don't get more intimate than that except perhaps when we become the BRIDE of Christ

Jesus makes it very clear that God is "HIS FATHER" and He confirms that He is the Messiah through the miracles He does that are not done in His own name; "The proof is in the miracles I do in the name of MY FATHER." (LB) He further states that belief in Him as the SON brings eternal life; "For it is MY FATHER'S will that everyone who sees his SON and believes on him should have eternal life and that I should raise him at the last day." (LB)

The Jewish leaders were ready to stone Jesus to death when He uttered the words, "I and MY FATHER ARE ONE" (LB) because this made him equal with God, but the plans of the Father become even more exciting when Jesus prays for those who will believe in him; "I do not ask concerning them only, but also concerning those who believe in me because of the disciples message, so that ALL WOULD BE ONE, JUST AS YOU FATHER ARE IN ME AND I IN YOU, that they also would be in US, so that the world would believe that you sent me." (OMB)

The evidence that Jesus has come is revealed in His church by the UNITY between the SON, the FATHER and EACH OTHER which is the expression of love for one another. You cannot have unity without love. This relationship is confirmed by the HOLY SPIRIT with the evidence of signs and miracles following the preaching of the word.

WELCOME TO THE REAL CHURCH... WILL YOU JOIN US ON THE JOURNEY WITH THIS GOAL?

Shalom.

Ron Harris

