

February 14, 2015

I recently saw a painting of the Last Supper where Jesus and the Apostles were all laughing. It was delightful and such a contrast to how we have sanitised our view of God. My reaction to the picture was to burst into a smile... smiling is contagious, laughing too. But the question becomes, does God smile or laugh, or is this just making God into our image? We only have two options as Christians, either we are made in the image of God or we make God into the image of man.

The Toronto Blessing was and is famous for the manifestation of laughing. Some have interpreted it as demonic, but I can't believe demons can have such enjoyment. Others say it's all about emotion, but so is watching your favourite movie or sports event. Others say, "How can this be of God; it is so irreverent." But our view of what is reverent is distorted because it's based on our own experience and cultural background. Those of us who have encountered the pleasure of laughter in this experience will attest to its validity.

There is a new release regarding the praise and worship of God; "In His presence is fullness of joy and pleasures forever more." In the book of Zephaniah Scripture further states; "For the Lord your God has arrived to live among you, He is a mighty Saviour. He will give you victory, He will rejoice over you with great gladness, He will love you and not accuse you" (LB). Is that a joyous choir I hear? No, it is the Lord exalting over you with happy song."

Do you think that God might have had a smile on His face when He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?" Or have you considered that God might express the same pride over His kids as we do over ours when they achieve a reward for skating, top grades at school, or just look so beautiful? Do you think He is emotionless when He states, "Well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy..."? He was so pleased with Enoch that He took him straight to His presence, and as for David, God said "he is a man after my own heart." How do you picture God's face in all of these instances?

As a son I wanted, above everything else to please my father. I wanted his endorsement but now my desire is to have God's smile of approval. Mothers smile with delight as they hold their newborns in their arms but even if our parents reject us the Psalmist states, "When my father and mother forsake me then the Lord will take me up."

As I shared with a Christian friend how I have seen the wonder of God's ultimate plan for us to become "one with Him," I felt the thrill God has in revealing Himself to us. The following morning as I meditated on the experience, I sensed God smiling at me, but as I looked again, His smile turned to laughter. I thought at first that He was amused by me so I asked Him, "Are you laughing at me?" But He replied, "I am not laughing *at* you, I am laughing *with* you." God was taking pleasure in my pleasure, and just like the true Father that He is, we were enjoying experiencing our fellowship together. Jesus prayed, "That they might be one as we are one."

I sensed His favour, His smile and we laughed together, God and man, and only because of what Jesus has done. This is God "outside the box." If it wasn't for others having similar encounters, I would be concerned that I was fantasising about God's outward display of His love and favour towards me.

Shalom.

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