

December 11, 2014

“To us, the greatest demonstration of God’s love for us is His sending His Son into the world to give us life through Him. We see real love, not in the fact that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to make atonement for our sins. If God loved us as much as that, surely we in turn, should love each other.”

Love makes both parties vulnerable. Homicides are more frequent among “significant others” than any other relationship, so there is always potential for pain. If we reject or fail in our response to His love does He feel that rejection and pain? In Genesis, God states that because of man’s sinfulness, “The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth and his heart was filled with pain.” Isaiah speaks of the Messiah as being “Despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering.” Ezekiel states “I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord and you became mine... But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute.” You can feel the pain of rejection that God is expressing. In Hosea His heart is open as He calls, “I LONG to redeem them but they speak against me. They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail on their beds.”

To varying degrees, each of us has experienced the pain of rejection and we may be able to identify with Jesus when He grieved over Jerusalem; “You who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have LONGED to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

How I grieve when I hear of child abuse, human trafficking, child slavery, abuse of women (particularly under the control of Islam), and brutal beheadings. I experience both pain and anger and I can only pour out my heart to God in prayer for those so badly treated, but I am not free of the grief or anger.

What of my complaining about how badly I may have been treated, rejected, insulted, despised or offended? God for His part knows my thoughts even before I think them so He continuously experiences this type of detail six and half billion times for each man, woman and child.

His reply to the abused is “Like as a father He pities his children, he knows our frame he remembers that we are dust,” but for the unrepentant who carry out these atrocities His anger will be revealed. Yes, now I can see how He can be both a God of Love and also a God of judgement.

As I drafted this article, I never expected to enter God’s pain as intensely as I did when for a nano second I was allowed to be part of His pain. I recall my vision of being on the sea shore invited by God to enter that “Journey into the Unknown,” and the realisation that this experience of seeing the heart of the Servant God was part of the riches of who He is. In light of such love, such mercy, such suffering all I can do is join the anthem: “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them singing, ‘To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, forever and ever.’” And I fell down and worshipped..

Shalom.

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