

Meditation: THE LOVE OF GOD

The Bible speaks of God as a jealous God. In fact, jealous is more than a characteristic of God; it is also one of God's names, as told in Exodus 34:14: *Do not worship any other gods, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.* Some people don't like to think of God as jealous, seeing jealousy only as a negative quality. I see it also as a sign of love.

Throughout the Scriptures God uses the imagery of marriage to describe his relationship with his people. When his people worship other gods, he calls that adultery. Spiritually, we have left our first love (God) and gone after other lovers. To understand why this stirs jealousy in God, we need to look at the quality and quantity of God's love.

In Ephesians 3 Paul prays that the believers might have the power to know how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge. We learn here that God's love is bigger than human minds can comprehend, but by the power of the Holy Spirit we can – and should – make the attempt. Meditating on the Scriptures, such as this one, helps and so does reading and thinking about devotional materials written by others who love our Lord. One of my favorite poems along this line is a verse of a hymn written by F. M. Lehman, entitled "The Love of God":

Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.

To grasp its beauty, let's try to imagine the scene described in that verse. Picture every man and woman on earth, including ourselves, standing along the edge of an ocean that has been drained of water and refilled with ink. All of us are professional writers who have been given a common assignment: Write about the love of God until everything that could be said about the subject has been written down. An endless supply of fountain pens has been made available to us, and the entire sky is now paper on which we may write. Before we have exhausted our subject, the ocean has run out of ink, nor is there a scrap of clean paper to write on! Such is the quality and quantity of God's love.

Now another question begs for attention: Why did God pour out such marvelous love on US? Was it because we were so good that we deserved his love? For a partial answer, let's meditate on Romans 5:8, which says: *God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was proof of God's love for us, and all the more so since we were SINNERS when this event took place.

The children's story of "Beauty and the Beast" comes to mind as an illustration. The marvel of that story is not that the Beast loved Beauty, but that Beauty loved the Beast, even before he was transformed into someone desirable. In the story of salvation, Jesus is Beauty personified, and we, collectively and individually, are the Beast with beastly behavior. Amazing as it may seem, Jesus wants a love relationship with any Beast who will return his love. And when we do respond to the love of God, what a transformation takes place! Gone is all our beastliness and there we are: children of God – forever!

Our final verse for this meditation is John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* We cannot

fully comprehend the meaning behind that little word “so.” But we can know that the death of Jesus on the cross was the greatest love gift the world has ever known. From those who receive this gift, our jealous God expects loyalty. Sounds reasonable to me!

© April, 2009
Verna Kwiatkowski

www.vernakwiatkowski.com