

The Word and His Dad

The Chosen

Recently, I decided to start watching The Chosen. I'm not very good at watching this show. I probably shed tears in every episode and I'm only on episode seven. Never mind the petty criticisms about the lingo and the filler dialogue and stories that have no way of being validated. They have (so far) done a masterful job at showing Jesus as the gentle, kind, and compassionate Lamb of God.

There is the scene where Simon (later to be renamed Peter) meets Jesus. It's so powerful. He is at the end of his rope for various reasons and Jesus uses his boat to teach some people on the shore. They had been fishing all night but caught nothing. Jesus tells them to throw the net back out one more time. It fills up such that it almost breaks.

And Simon's response? He threw himself at the feet of Jesus and asked him to leave! "I am a sinful man" he sobbed. But Jesus, looking upon him with his compassion and gentleness, said "Don't be afraid Simon. Follow Me and I will make you a fisher of men".

My Response

So many of us relate to Simon. He's the one who sometimes says or does the wrong thing. He is raw. He is real. He has great highs and dreadful lows. He was a sinful man... Just like me.

If I were around at that time and Jesus came to me, I'd react the same way. I'd start out by telling Him what a wretched person I am. I'd tell Him that I will fail Him. I'd tell Him that my brokenness is unworthy of the calling of the Lamb of God.

And then He would fix those eyes of compassion and love on me and say "don't be afraid Rick". And my heart would be torn apart at the seams. I, too, would fall on my face at His feet and sob. In that moment, I'd know that the Lamb of God has not only accepted me as I am, but He has also chosen me. And then... I would follow Him.

Healings and Compassion

The show portrays many of the encounters Jesus had with the sick, the needy and the demon possessed. In each scene, His compassion and gentleness was on full display. And in each scene, I had to pause the ol' Apple TV because I was overcome with just who Jesus is.

He heals the leper. Pause and cry. He forgives the paralytic's sins and then heals him. Pause and cry. Then there is Nicodemus waiting around the corner to follow Jesus, but just could not bring himself to make that last step. And Jesus waited for him... So powerful. So emotional.

I am fairly certain that if I were a disciple then, I'd cry at every miracle and for every convert. I am also pretty sure that Jesus would probably tell Peter to go get me a stiff drink every once in a while. I kid. Maybe.

Why is this so impactful to me? Maybe some of you are probably wondering that or maybe some are wanting to text me and make fun of me for crying so much.

Purpose and Motivation

What is the purpose of the Word of God?

Ultimately, everything in the Word points to the reconciliation of sinful man to a Holy God. That reconciliation is through His Son, Jesus Christ. So, you can truly say that the Word of God is about Jesus.

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God.

2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 All things were created through Him,

and apart from Him not one thing was created

that has been created.

4 Life was in Him,

and that life was the light of men.

5 That light shines in the darkness,

yet the darkness did not overcome it.

What is God's motivation?

Simply put... Love.

What is Man's Responsibility

Man's responsibility begins with belief and with faith.

Do you believe that God loves you?

Do you believe that His Son Jesus died on the cross to make a way for you to be reconciled?

An Interesting Scripture to sum this up

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Here we have all of this summed up in a simple sentence.

For God so loved the world (this is His motivation).

That He gave His only begotten Son (this is the purpose of the Word of God – reconciliation)

That whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life (This is man's responsibility)

Believe in Him

I think there is more to believing in Him besides just the belief that He existed and died for your sins. I think it means to learn of Him, His teachings, His life and His death so that belief in Him becomes more intimate. Learning His character reveals very clearly to us the motivation of the Father as love. More on that in a minute.

If you've been a Believer for one day or for 50 years, the daily task for us is to draw near to Him. The Bible says that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. As this happens, you begin to experience Him in new ways. You begin to hear Him speaking to you, your heart changes, your face might change... You begin to recognize that you are loved.

Earning the favor of God – We Still Try

How many of you have ever not felt like praying for something because you were particularly bad that day?

How many of you can identify with this song by Lauren Daigle?

I am guilty

Ashamed of what I've done, what I've become

These hands are dirty

I dare not lift them up to the Holy one

I've been hiding

Afraid I've let you down, inside I doubt

That You still love me

But in Your eyes there's only grace now

How often do we assign our feelings or self-image or unscriptural doctrines to God?

Hi God – it's your worthless piece of sh!t. Ascribing how I felt about myself to God... Expecting that He was frequently angry or disappointed in me. Brennan Manning said:

For those who feel their lives are a grave disappointment to God, it requires enormous trust and reckless, raging confidence to accept that the love of Jesus Christ knows no shadow of alteration or change. When Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened," He assumed we would grow weary, discouraged, and disheartened along the way. These words are a touching testimony to the genuine humanness of Jesus. He had no romantic notion of the cost of discipleship. He knew that following Him was as unsentimental as duty, as demanding as love. – Brennan Manning

What's the truth about God?

One day Jesus tells His disciples that He is leaving to prepare a place for them in His Father's house and that they know the way. Of course, the disciples respond with... we don't even know where you are going, much less the way to get there. It is then that Jesus says the famous line "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me".

Thank God for the Word. Thank God for Jesus. And thank God for the disciples! They give us so much insight into ourselves.

From our modern vantage point, it's often easy to shake our heads at some of the things the disciples asked of Jesus. We have hindsight. But we should be ever grateful for these questions or requests.

Philip responded by saying "Lord, show us the Father and that's good enough for us". This request gives Jesus the opportunity to explain something that, to this day, should be a revelation to all who believe.

John 14:7-11

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time without your knowing Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves.

Guilt and Fear

So many Christians have a relationship with God steeped in fear and guilt. We work so hard at penance or good works or anything we think can earn ourselves favor with God, an answer to prayers, or even our very salvation.

Through the centuries, some of us have come to think of God the Father as a sin counter who cannot wait to unleash His judgment upon us. Then we look to His right and we see the loving Jesus who calms God down when He's mad at us. I'm not even saying we rationalize this completely, yet it is evident in a lot of our faith and spiritual behaviors.

Throughout the dark ages, the organized church dove further and further into a graceless sort of faith that resulted in spiritual repression and a very wrong picture of our God. Along comes Martin Luther and the protestant reformation. Luther was on a pilgrimage to Rome when he read this Scripture in **Habakkuk 2:4, "the just shall live by faith"**.

This began his journey of justification by faith. Faith, not guilt, penance, or fear. Now all these years later, we have learned to inject the fear, guilt and penance into religion once again.

Jesus never admonished anyone for their strong guilt or fear. He never healed a person and told them that their penance has made them whole. No, He always admonished people for their faith.

It's always been about faith. But it is a difficult thing to have faith in someone if you don't know their true character...

The Character of God

Back to the verses in John. And back to my tears and what I hope will be yours (the good kind, of course). Jesus told Philip and the other disciples that they have seen the Father because they have seen Jesus.

He explains that His works, even His words are from the Father. So, every time we read that Jesus was MOVED with compassion before healing someone, we can read that as the Father was MOVED with compassion. When Jesus chose Simon, the Father chose Simon. When Jesus has compassion for the woman at the well with her many husbands... The Father has compassion... Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Him. They are not good cop and bad cop. They are the Creators of everything and their motivation is love.

Jesus perfectly demonstrated who His Father was while He roamed this earth. His goal was that we may know the Father through Him... That we may have faith in Him who sent Jesus. Not out of fear or guilt, but out of the incredible motivation of love demonstrated by our Father in Jesus.

To continue in a relationship of fear and guilt is absolutely not what the Father had in mind when He gave His only Son to reconcile a broken world to Himself. Because of the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus, all are called unto reconciliation. And when Jesus has called you... so has the Father.

So when we read the Scriptures and are touched by the words and works of Jesus, let's remember that these are the will and character of the Father as well. And when you find it easy to believe that Jesus loves you with a love beyond understanding... know that it is the same love the Father has for you. If this resonates with you, then please join me at His feet in tears of joy.