

The God of Divine Paradox

The Apostle Paul, who heard Jesus on the Damascus Road, who was taught in a desert for three years by the Holy Spirit, and who had been gloriously transported to the third heaven, still expressed a warm bewilderment with the mystery of God. In Romans 11:33-36, Paul praises God and explains that He is unsearchable and “His paths are beyond tracing out.” Before Paul, Job had learned the same thing as with his hand over his mouth he listened to God’s voice speak from the whirlwind. The result was that Job repented and said “Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.” These men knew that God acts in ways contrary to man’s reason.

God’s choices, ways, and nature have often been puzzling to me. When I believe He should go right, He will go straight. When I believe He will surely turn left, He goes right. If I chose a direction based on the exact opposite of my instinct, I can still be wrong. In Isaiah 55:8 & 9, God patiently explains that His ways and nature are nothing like mine. He points out that His ways and nature are high above me. Like the brilliant night sky which is mysterious, wondrous, and unknowable, so seems Father God.

Consider that Father God rarely uses the local hero to accomplish His will. He chose a disgraced murderer to lead Israel out of Egypt to the doorstep of the Promised Land. He chose an underwhelming shepherd boy to be Israel’s greatest king. Joseph, Gideon, Esther, and Daniel were not obvious picks to be world changers. Then there are Jesus’ disciples. They were the “Dirty Dozen” of Christendom, made up of anonymous men almost entirely from lowly Galilee. There was not a prince, intellectual or warrior among them. These unexpected champions of God are perhaps less surprising than the mind-twisting paradoxes God has woven into the world.

Free will is one of those perplexing God concepts. God allowed choice. He could have formed Adam from dust, created the garden without the forbidden fruit, banned Satan from the earth, and enjoyed communion with untainted man forever. Instead, He gave the perfect couple the ability to choose rebellion. That was risky and I confess that I would have gone another way. Similar paradoxes include God’s instructions on unlimited forgiveness, “crucifying the flesh” in order to have life, resting in His presence, the meek inheriting the earth, rejoicing in persecution, the “first shall be last”, “turning the other cheek” and loving others more than ourselves. God’s ways make the natural mind rebel.

Any comparison between my natural thoughts and God’s thoughts reveals an immense gap. In view of God’s perfect holiness I find that gap reasonable. Father God – in another paradox – has declared it unacceptable. Remember the Garden? That was the perfect plan of God which rebellion delayed. Our dear Lord finds that break in fellowship between Creator and Man to be so offensive that He provided His own Son Jesus to bridge the gap. Imagine the thought process of God in His sending His beloved and cherished Son to die an atoning and substitutionary death for us. It is rightfully unimaginable, but in this spectacular act of love is the bridge across the gap between

man and God. Through Jesus Christ, the gap between men and God can be closed and through the indwelling Holy Spirit that fellowship can be restored.

In fact, Father God, who is so far above me, commands me to seek Him (Isaiah 55:6). He promises me that if I seek Him I will find Him (1 Chronicles 28:9). He whispers to me that if I draw near to Him, He will draw near to me (James 4:8). He calls me friend and treats me as His friend by revealing Himself to me (John 15:15 & 16). He expects me to draw so close to Him that I both know Him, treat Him, and call Him “Daddy” (Romans 8:15). Sinful man and Holy God united in precious communion – now that is a paradox! How is it possible? My mind reels at the truth of it. It is because God gave His only Son as a sacrifice for our sin and sent the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His children that I can embrace the ways of God as my own. “Oh happy day when Jesus took my sins away!”

Paul beautifully unravels the paradox of how a sinful man can know the heart of Unknowable God in 1 Corinthians 2: 9-16 (NIV):

*“No eye has seen, no eye has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the Spirit of the world, but the **Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.** This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment: “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

So there it is. For sinners, it is the blood of Jesus that bridges the gap sin has placed between men and Father God. For Believers, it is the very presence of God placed in us in the form of Holy Spirit that allows us to know Father God. Through the Holy Spirit we have the ability to seek, find, rest in, and know our God as “Daddy”. We can again come into communion with Him. God made a way. He gives us life through Jesus. He gives us love, understanding, and instruction through the Holy Spirit. He bestows on us the “mind of Christ”. He has bridged the vast gap between us and given us everything we need to fully enjoy Him.

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