



Considering the Missionary Heart of God Devotion

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (Psalm 103:2-5).

What of Our Missionary God?

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance (2 Peter 3:8-9).

Our Triune God is the original missionary. Jesus tells us, *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost* (Luke 19:10). It was God's plan all along to redeem stubborn creation. This alone demonstrates His extensive generosity and brings us joy because it was we ourselves who brought about our separation from Him by disobedience to His Word.

But God forgives. From eternity, God intended all would enjoy forgiveness by way of all things accomplished by Jesus. Jesus is God's chosen way of showing all people the source of His own wholehearted joy and pleasure. Every individual – starting from the beginning of all time and place and to the last of moment creation inclusively – is invited to the eternal place where He is. God, in whom all glory dwells, is hereby approachable.

And What of Our Jesus?

"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:11-19).

Jesus continues in the work of introducing the human race to the goodness of God. He wants us to know for a certainty that God **loves** us, and that He loves God; **this** God is the Father, His Father **and** ours. **This** God loves us and demonstrated it by sending His missionary Son with this liberating news, and by giving and entrusting guardianship of the solemn Name and reputation to Him. Jesus acts out of His desire that humankind would come to know the One who is fearsomely good. Jesus loves us.

God's Messiah comes nonstop from the Father's heart as His true missionary to bring home God's creation intact, to announce this news, and to show wayward creation the way into God's heart, our forever home. This epic work included an historic, uniquely-engineered,

heroic mission invasion into this world to save it from itself; to search out and pick up all of its fractures and fragments; to totally and forever release it from all bondage, guilt, and shame; and to be united in human experience in its perpetuation. Jesus loves us.

He accomplished this with a perfect, once-and-for-all sacrifice to Creator God in exchange for His official, continued sanction upon that work which has been once-and-for-all declared by God to be “good.” By loving His Father so thoroughly, so obediently the overflow is the unfathomable final recompense for the thing which – in the beginning of all things – God made good. Jesus was, is now, and will ever be the only Way to everlasting approval. He both is now and will be King forever. Jesus loves creation.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:1-3).

What of God’s Missionary heart?

“Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation” (Psalm 91:14-16).

The dimensions of God’s heart of love expand beyond time, space, and far into immortality. It permanently disturbs both world and human history. It has before and continues to saturate nations, cultures, languages, genealogies, societies, tribes, and families and finds place in the helpless individual heart, giving unending hope. We do not fully grasp love’s largesse, depth, power, liberty, and loving kindness. But we understand by His truthful word and preaching prophets that love comes into the world with an undying impact for all. Nothing is able to disturb that. God loves us.

God designs our unique histories that we might to come to know Him and serve Him in trusting love. Consider that He placed each of us in the world for **His** good pleasure. Think about how carefully He reached into your family and fetched you before the beginning began. Return to that exceptional occasion in the history of His world where He made himself known to you and captured **your** life in the interior of His missionary heart. God loves you. God loves **us**.

Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 117:1-2)

Now What of Ourselves?

“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me” (John 17:6-8).

We appropriately respond to our maker God in worship and in praise for this ancient mystery of love; it has always been so. We are mindful of the effects of time and place in His personal summons to us. We acknowledge His administration of our place in time and those

He has given to us so that we are faithfully consoled by His grace. We are set apart by His particular great and generous rescue of us, a matter of greatest importance to Him. According to His unchanging Word and His means of grace, He un-cripples us from any sinful circumstance.

He is, as we in conscience must be, ever mindful of our genetic human frailty. So, it is He himself who strengthens and helps us. We are charged with trusting God for love's ultimate result and urged into service at this news. We are, hereby, most thankful for Jesus who has preached the faith of God so clearly that things concerning God might be understandable to us. Without Him, we can do nothing. For certain, God cannot fail.

We give our most profound thanks for Jesus in whose missionary heart we live forever.

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD (Isaiah 2:1-5).

Our Prayer:

Loving Father, walking in Your light, we approach Your powerful majesty with thanks that You thought humankind worth taking back into Your heart. We are thankful for this word that summons the whole creation to You: Your heart for all people throughout all time as told us by the prophets and by Jesus. It has looked into every place for Your own; it has unburdened hearts; it has announced peace with God.

We give thanks for the unity of our hearts with Yours in Christ. This has made us one with Your message that Your desire is to locate us permanently with You, and has permitted us to live our lives with assurance we are where Jesus is – within Your missionary heart. We give our eternal praise to You. Amen.

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