

What Is the Gospel?

Installment #2 — The Progenitor

In installment one we spoke of how an uncreated indomitable life form that we call God impregnated a human known as Mary with his seed and that the male child she gave birth to became the progenitor of a new species. She named this child Jesus, from all outward appearances he was just like any other human and though he shared their outward appearance he was not of this world. The word progenitor is defined as originator: the originator of, or original model for, something. The Scripture declares that Jesus was the firstborn among many brothers and that he was the pattern son. This word pattern is the same word that is used for the pattern that women use to cut out material when they are making a garment so that it will be just like the original.

For a moment let's discuss a little of what Scripture reveals about Jesus — the progenitor. Hebrews declares that he is the brightness of God's glory and his express image. Jesus himself told his followers that he that had seen him had seen the Father. He said that he was in the Father and the Father was in him. He even went so far as to declare that he could not do anything unless the Father was doing it. It was more than just a dependant relationship or even a symbiotic one, Jesus was the Father clothed in an earth suit. It is a concept that my mind cannot understand fully from an intellectual point of view, but I can accept it by faith.

Now that we have established that Jesus and the Father were one then we can assume that one of his mission goals besides becoming the progenitor of a new species was to reveal what that species would be like by revealing the true and divine nature of his Father — God! In John 17 in speaking with his Father in prayer he declared, " ... I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." NASB. It is of utmost importance to remember that God may have many unchangeable virtues like faithfulness, mercy, justice, righteousness, goodness and loyalty and on and on, but the very substance of which his uncreated being is made of is Love. The Scriptures declare that love is the only thing that cannot fail. I used to think that if God is love then love must be God, but we must remember the error in that train of thought reduces an omnipotent uncreated being to an act and nothing is farther from the truth. The fact that from time to time humans express "love" to one another can in no way be compared to this incomparable uncreated being.

This progenitor is therefore a being of love. It is this divine nature that determines every other aspect of his life. One of my favorite authors, A.W. Tozer, made a statement that went something like this, "What comes to your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you." While it is impossible for a

created limited being to even begin to grasp the concept of how utterly magnificent this God is it behooves us to try. Tozer said, and I am paraphrasing, it is like trying to reach out a grab a star from the heavens, one will never succeed, but in reaching out we may point the way and at least gain a glimpse of him. It is impossible for us to personally rise above our conception of God or to realize the reality of his plan if we do not know either.

Another aspect of his love was revealed in his sacrificial death on the cross. No human ever suffered a more brutal and vile death than Jesus did. He was without fault and yet he bore all our sins in his own body on the tree so that he could extend to us his perfect forgiveness and righteousness. Scripture declares that it is our sin that has created a separation between us and our creator, but it also declares that for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame and set down at the right hand of the throne of God. The reason that God doesn't distinguish between one sin and another is that any sin separates us from him and his ability to love us with his whole being. God has always desired someone capable of returning his love and this new species alone can do that. We will discuss the ultimate plan of God — the Bride, in a later installment as well as just what this joy was and why this atonement was so absolutely necessary in order for him to complete his mission.

Suffice it to say that this all together lovely one has won my heart and I can trust and follow this kind of God. He died for me when I was his enemy and hated his name. He did not say, "I will die for you if you will be good and do everything I tell you from now on," he just died. Isaiah said it like this, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement that brought us peace was placed upon him and by his wounds we were healed." The hymnist echoes this understanding when he says, "'twas there for sin which I have done he groaned upon the tree, amazing pity, grace unknown and love beyond degree. This is truly Good News! Somehow we tend to treat this as something to be accepted and then quickly moved on from to get to greater things. Gospel means good news and as Paul said in Romans, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for salvation..." and if it is the power then there is no greater power it is the power. Our understanding of the true and full Gospel is therefore paramount if we are to become this new species — the fruit of his resurrection.