

Pastor's Corner

The Father

September 27, 2006

Dear Friend,

Last week we talked a little about the concept of the Trinity, the three Persons who make up the Godhead. Father, Son, Holy Spirit—together they're God, and individually they are fully God as well. Kinda confusing? Perhaps it's because we're talking about God here. And since He is so much higher than us humans, perchance we will never fully and completely understand the concept; but we can surely try to wrap our little brains around the concept!

It's like a dog who waits for his master to come home. Dogs surely don't understand why we spend so much time talking into a little box that we press to our ear after it chirps like a hungry puppy. But they still are fascinated by us and spend as much time as they can being with us. So, as we consider the mystery of the Godhead, we will not fully understand it; but we can still be amazed by God and spend as much time as we can with Him.

The first Person of the Godhead we usually refer to as the Father. The Bible doesn't tell us a lot about how He looks. We find a brief description in Ezekiel 1:26, 27 where the prophet sees One on the throne with "the appearance like that of a man." So His general form is more like that of a human than a tree or a lizard. Since we were made in His image, I guess that makes sense. In Daniel 7:9 we're told briefly that "His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of His head was white like wool." We're given just enough information to assure us that He is a real Being, and not simply an impersonal force.

Broadly speaking, some of the characteristics of the Father include that He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. I think that if we were to pick just one characteristic of the Father it would have to be love. This might come as a surprise to some people who have this image of a mean, hateful, stern father that must be appeased by the benevolent Son and whoever else we can get to intercede on the poor humans' behalf. But the Bible paints a much different picture. Jesus assured us that "God so loved the world, that He gave..." Jesus also tells us that "the Father Himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God." Did you catch that? Jesus is trying to make the point very clear: *Hey, the Father Himself loves you! Don't just think it's Me that loves you; no, the Father Himself loves you.*

Now, the Bible tells us that no one can see the Father and live. He's so great, so sinless, so pure, that if a sinner human were to be in His presence—poof, all gone—'cause sin in God's presence is combustible and would be consumed. But Jesus set all that glory aside, and became a human, and came and walked and talked and lived right here with humans, to show us exactly what God thinks of us. In fact, if the Father could come down here and walk with us without us becoming smoke in His presence, the Father would treat us and talk with us and hang out with us just as Jesus did.

Jesus told His disciples that He wasn't different from His Father in His love for humans; in fact, His father would treat us just the same. "*If you really knew Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on, you do know Him and have seen him.*" Philip said, *'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.'* Jesus answered: *'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a*

long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?" (John 14). So if we want to get a clear picture of who the Father is, we simply have to look at the life of Jesus. How Jesus treated people. What Jesus said to people. And what Jesus *didn't* say to people!

Some people find these verses confusing, and say that Jesus and His Father are one, meaning that they are one Being. But that's not what the Bible teaches. Jesus didn't pray to Himself. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration and the Voice said, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him," Jesus wasn't talking to Himself. No, the Father and the Son are two distinctly different beings. But if you've seen one in the Godhead, you've seen them all, so to speak.

If I were to be able to speak with a little frog in his language, and he asks me all about my brother, and I say, "If you've seen me, you've seen my brother," I'm not saying that my brother and I are one person. No, but Seth and I are both humans; so if the little toad has seen me, a human, then Seth would be no different, because Seth also has hair on the top of his head, and knees that bend forward, and ten toes, and nails on the tips of each finger. Seth's not another species; he's a human just like me. And it's the same with God. The Father is divine, or God. Jesus is also divine; so to see one, you've seen the other.

Let's talk more about Jesus, one of the other Beings of the Godhead, next week.

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