

31.10.2020 JESUS THE MASTER TEACHER

"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" 2 Corinthians 4:6

"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10

Jesus' mission on earth was to redeem and save mankind. In doing so, He also revealed to mankind the love of God the Father who sent His Son for our redemption.

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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:16, 17

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. Desire of Ages: p 22.

Revealing the Father

In Hebrews and the gospel of John, we find who came to reveal the Father. It was no other than the second person of the Godhead; Christ Jesus the Creator and Redeemer of mankind.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hebrews 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men...That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. John 1:1-4, 9

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. John 1:18

The Witness of Jesus

"He who has seen Me has seen the Father." John 14:9

"I have manifested (revealed) Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world." John 17:6

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them...For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 6

God the Father is our Loving Heavenly Father

'Father' was Jesus' favourite term for addressing God. In the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke it appears about 65 times. In the gospel of John we find it over 100 times. In contrast, in the entire Old Testament God described is as Father only about 15 times.

Jesus called God the Father '*Abba*' – an Aramaic word, denoting a close and intimate relationship. It was used by young children, older children and adults and '*Father*' is probably the best English equivalent. This itself is remarkable as in Old Testament times, God the Father was not referred to in such intimate terms.

Jesus told his disciples that they too were to address God as Father (*Abba*) e.g. '*Our Father, who art in heaven...*' *Matthew 6:11, Luke 11:2*. Early church history tells us that even the Greek speaking Gentile churches addressed God as '*Abba*'. The New Testament writers also emphasised the Fatherhood of God. While Christ was the Son of God from eternity past, nevertheless by His death and resurrection, all mankind can choose to accept the gift of being sons and daughters of God by adoption. When we do so, we are given the privilege of calling God '*Abba, Father*'.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 John 3:1

'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' John 20:17

For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Romans 8:15

Reading the Master Teacher's Mind: the Mind of Christ

The principle of the world is self-exaltation and pride. The principle of the kingdom of God is self-denial and humility. Christ our Saviour and Brother has shown us the path of humility.

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same... therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren. Hebrews 2:14, 17

It should come as no surprise to us that Jesus' earthly family tree (*Matthew 1*) consisted of people who were considered great sinners (adulterers, murderers, wicked kings, idolaters), people who were considered outcasts (the Gentiles) and people who were often treated as second-class citizens (women). His family tree reflected those He had come to save, for '*there is none righteous, no, not one*' *Romans 3:10*.

Whenever we are tempted to sneer at our fellow Christians because we consider their family tree ignoble, let us remember the family tree of our Saviour and Lord, Christ Jesus. He who was equal with God, humbled Himself to become Man, and take upon Himself the infirmities of mankind.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:5-8

If we have received Christ, His Spirit gives us the mind of Christ and the willingness to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:1-4

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. James 4:10

Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:5-7

The Condescension of Christ:

‘Christ was treated as we deserve that we might be treated as He deserves.’ EG White

‘The Son of God became a man that men might become the sons of God.’ CS Lewis.

“He [Christ] died for me. He made His righteousness mine and made my sin His own; and if He made my sin His own, then I do not have it, and I am free.” Martin Luther

“He became what we are, so that He might make us what He is....” Athanasius.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger... For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit, that He may save me. John Chrysostom

The Master Teacher and Reconciliation

Reconciliation begins with God. As children of Adam, we are born with a nature that is alienated from God and we cannot initiate reconciliation with God. But God who is rich in mercy covenanted from eternity to reconcile us unto Himself.

God has entered the world to offer redemption to all mankind (1 Timothy 2:6). Jesus is the Saviour of the world – of both Jew and Gentile. He is not just the son of Abraham and David (Matthew 1:1); He is also the son of Adam, the son of God (Luke 3:38). He has come to redeem all the sons of God.

He does not wait for us to come to Him. Of ourselves we would not come to Him. It is the revelation of the unconditional, unchanging, self-giving love of God as manifested on Calvary that draws mankind to God (John 12:32). While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). When we His enemies, He reconciled us to God (Romans 5:10). Our God is the God who justifies the ungodly (Romans 5:6), who made Christ to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

All this should reveal to us our true condition. We are sinners through and through and in us there dwells no good thing. To save us from our helpless condition Jesus came to earth.

We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the atonement (the reconciliation). Romans 5:11

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not [d]imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

The Master Teacher’s First Pupils

Mary

Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest;

and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. Luke 1:30-33

And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name." Luke 1:46-49

Joseph

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:20, 21

The Shepherds

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" Luke 2:10-14

We must never forget that three-fold message of the angel (Luke 2:10, 11):

It is 'good news for all people'.

Jesus is the Saviour of the world.

Jesus is Christ the Lord.

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus is both Saviour and Lord. As Saviour, He has redeemed and ransomed us; as Lord, He is the Victor over the devil, sin and death. He offers mankind redemption and righteousness as we accept Him as Saviour and Lord of our lives.

How shall we respond? As did the angels:

Glory to God in the highest – He is the Author of our salvation.

On earth, peace – God has reconciled us to each other.

Good-will to men – God has reconciled us to Himself.

The shepherds were the first ambassadors... *Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them... Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.* Luke 2:17-20

The Wise Men

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him... When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:1-2, 10-11.

They were looking for Jesus
They were looking for the right reason – to worship Him
Their treasure followed their hearts; they offered it to the One they worshipped.

Our Response to Jesus:

All humanity is divided into 2 camps – those who are drawn to Christ and rejoice that He has come to save them and those who reject and despise Him.

Herod the King, the chief priests and the scribes chose to deny Christ the Messiah.

In contrast, Joseph and Mary and the wise men sought God's will and word. The wise men (Gentiles, all of them) rejoiced and worshipped when they saw the young Child. They opened their treasures and gave gifts to the Child (Matthew 2:1-12).

Where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also (Matthew 6:24). Is Jesus the treasure of our hearts? Do we offer Him the best gifts – our lives, to be devoted to His service?

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." John 6:68
