
DISCOVERING THE DELIGHT OF GOD



INTRODUCTION

A recent conversation with my son prompted a fresh look into the trinitarian nature of God. Enticed by the beauty of this divine truth I find myself once again in awe at the mystery of the Godhead. The sense of being overwhelmed and upside down in an ocean of transcendent beauty is exhilarating! For brief moments as I ponder God's eternity, I feel like I begin my ascent up the ladder of comprehension only to tumble headlong into the reality that such wonders are far too glorious for my understanding. *"Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite."*¹ I find the paradox of the mystery of God irresistible. On the one hand we are invited to search out the deep things of God by the divine escort of the Holy Spirit, *"But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."*² yet on

¹ Ps.147:5

² 1 Cor.2:10

the other hand, *“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”*³ It’s somewhat scandalous that I’ve been invited, no, enticed, to devote my life to the pursuit of knowing what I’ll never fully understand. *“...to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge...”*⁴ But scandalous or not, the pursuit of God is precisely what you and I have been created for. *“...We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*⁵ We have been fashioned precisely to behold and then to become. *“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”*⁶ In a culture where so often the details of things are wantonly discarded along the wayside of productivity, advancement and experience the intricacies of the knowledge of God in His triune nature are deliberately limited in the Biblical scope, marvelously reserved for ushering the hungry through wisdom’s gilded corridors and into love’s hidden escape -the perfumed courtyards of divine beauty and grandeur.

The apostle Paul speaks of experienced glories in the paradise of God’s habitation where even the lyric of Heaven was too wonderful to be uttered by the human tongue! *“It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”*⁷ He speaks of spiritual mysteries, *“the mysteries of God”* in 1 Corinthians 4:1. These are realities that God has hidden within Himself. Truths, that unless God chooses to reveal them, can never be unearthed. When God hides something within Himself, He reserves its disclosure for those that are *in* Him. *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”*⁸ To be *in* God means that we are in deep relationship with Him. Yielded obedience to the will of God is the

³ Rom.11:33

⁴ Eph.3:16

⁵ 2 Cor.3:19

⁶ Jn.17:24

⁷ 2 Cor.12:1-4

⁸ Jn.15:4

defining hallmark of our communion with Him. Obedience is the fragrance of deep fellowship because it demonstrates the reality of a God who can be trusted. Only those that know God will obey Him fully.

From the beginning a spirit of religion has sought to approach God based on human effort alone. Religion ultimately despises the free gift of God's grace because grace rejects the triumphs of man as the currency of divine exchange. This too is part of the mystery of God.

AS YOU ARE IN ME AND I AM IN YOU

God is triune in nature. It's the most marvelous thing. Honestly, I can't even wrap my head around it. How absolutely brilliant of God! To be triune means to be three in one, a trinity in unity. How fascinating that God has chosen to express Himself as a trinity -a group of three! He is one in essence yet distinctly the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The essence of God, like the essence of anything else, speaks to what God is and all that God is. God is all that He is all of the time. In His revelation to Moses, when asked who He was, He stated, *"I am that I am,"*⁹ or *"I will be everything that I am."* God has an essence which cannot be slivered or compartmentalized. All that makes God God is His essence. Each of the persons of the trinity are essentially God, in their being they are co-equal and co-eternal. The Father isn't somehow more divine, or more God, than the Son or the Spirit. There is one God and thus there is one essence of God. Though God is spirit¹⁰ He expresses Himself as three distinct persons. Not separate in the sense that they exist apart from one another, but distinct in the sense that each can refer to Himself as *"I"* while referring to the others as *"You."* *"...that they may all be one. Just as **you**, Father, are united with **me** and I with **you**, I pray that they may be united with **us**, so that the world may believe that **you** sent **me**."*¹¹ Notwithstanding the distinctions in the persons of the Godhead, Jesus describes their relationship as being *in* one another. The divine essence indwells each of them (if we can say it that way) and thus the interior life and eternal and unchanging attributes of God are expressed and experienced by all of the member of the trinity. Each are possessors therefore each are partakers of that nature.

⁹ Ex.3:14

¹⁰ Jn.4:24

¹¹ Jn.17:24

US IN THEM

Jesus said a most peculiar thing to His disciples, *“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”*¹² From the perspective of these twelve Jewish men, Jesus, or, Yeshua, was the embodiment of a vast array of prophetic promises relating to the glory of Israel and the advent of an age when peace and prosperity were available for every Jew. As a sign of that which they hoped for, Jesus wielded seemingly unlimited power to bend the rules of nature and even resurrect the dead! And if that weren’t enough, He was their friend, surely even their own promotion in the coming kingdom rested with His immediate presence. No doubt it struck them as odd, and presumably quite contrary, whenever He mentioned that He would be killed and that He would be going away. *“Surely not!”* scolded Peter. But Jesus had something more in mind for them than their own promotion. He was going to equip them with the most unimaginable gift. *He would be in them!* ¹⁷ *the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”* ²⁰ *At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”*¹³

AS IT WAS FROM THE BEGINNING

*“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”*¹⁴ On the same night in which Jesus shared His last supper with His disciples He prayed this prayer. The whole of John 17 has come to be known as Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer or His Farewell Prayer as He would be on the cross in just a matter of hours. In this exchange between Jesus and His heavenly Father He pours forth in intercession the very longings of His heart. *“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”*¹⁵ With two thousand years of church history still on the horizon, we might ask ourselves why Jesus isn’t praying expressly about the great commission and the work of discipling nations. No doubt He prayed about this regularly, but tonight was different. God who became a man was seeking His reward -that those whom he loved would one day be with Him where He was in order to behold His beauty.

¹² Jn.16:7

¹³ Jn.14:17,20

¹⁴ Jn.17:5

¹⁵ Jn.17:24

But not just the beauty of the risen Lamb, no, the beauty which He had in the beginning before the created order had been brought forth. In the beginning, God was with God, a trinity in unity. Jesus yearned that His friends would know the hidden realm of the interrelationship of the Godhead. The divine interplay that not even the angels are able to peer into. Exquisite and transcendent beauty revealed, expressed and received with absolutely no hindrance at all. *“Bring them into this reality!” “Oh, that they would know us, as you purposed in the beginning. That they may be one with us!”* This thirst lay at the depth of Jesus’ farewell prayer. Humanity was created for the express purpose of relating to God. We were created in His image that we might know and experience Him in a way unique to all creation. We were fashioned in His likeness and now we have been given His Spirit that we could participate in the joyful embrace of divine desire! We were made for divine fellowship! God is spirit and we are spirit. We are spirits with a soul, that is, a consciousness and unique identity, and we have been given a body in order that we might relate to the world around us. Adam, the first man, was made to commune with God. Jesus, the second Adam, came that we might be joined once again into that lost fellowship, but this time *He* will dwell *in* us. Imagine, God deeply yearns for what was lost in Eden’s garden!

IT WAS LOVE

While we don’t have record of the divine interchange between the persons of the Godhead before time began, Jesus does give us insight into the nature of their relationship. *“...for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”*¹⁶ *“You loved me.”* That’s the essence of their relationship. Love. God is love. One in essence and three in person. Those three persons love one another. All that they did, thought, felt and the way in which they expressed themselves as one pre-existent being reflected the utmost in affection, delight and honor for one another. This is exactly what we have been created for, to experience and revel in this divine embrace, and to participate in it forever. Oh, the majesty of such a thing! On us has been bestowed the highest honor. The interior life of God has become our inheritance, our treasure. We haven’t *only* been saved from the power and penalty of sin, as truly glorious as that really is, we have been delivered so that we might be joined to Him -that we might become one with Him. *“¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”*¹⁷ Many have been taught to simply focus on just getting into Heaven. Mind you, this is a tremendous

¹⁶ Jn.17:25

¹⁷ 1 Cor.16:7

aspiration, but it falls tragically short of the hope to which we have been called. Heaven is a place, a realm. Its grandeur centers around a brilliant diamond-like¹⁸ mountain-city, the New Jerusalem, and is filled with indescribable beauty, fragrance, light, life and sound. But one day the new Jerusalem will descend from its lofty abode and anchor itself firmly in a sublunary bedrock.

Many people have been taught to anticipate our escape from planet earth as we leave our problems behind, but the Bible teaches that God will restore this terrestrial sphere to its ante-deluvian paradise. Imagine, a worldwide Eden where the properties of the natural and supernatural collide! From the biblical perspective what makes Heaven so appealing is not its distance from earth but the fact that it is the dwelling place of God Himself. We earnestly desire Heaven because we so ultimately desire God! *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”*¹⁹

The role of the Spirit as it relates to God’s interaction with humanity is the revealing, or the manifesting of God to the human spirit. He begins to bring forth into our understanding and experience glories that God has reserved exclusively for those in relationship with Him. But as it is written: *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”*²⁰ This is both a poetic and beautiful truth, but what does it mean? It’s easy to gloss over scripture, be moved by it in some way, and yet never really enter into its vast depth. What exactly is it that the Spirit reveals to us? Simply put, He brings forth eternal realities about the ways in which God loves us -His deep commitments, His fierce protection, His undying affections, His outrageous provision and the infinite expressions of the unsearchable riches of His beauty.

*“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, **and have loved them as You have loved Me.**”*²¹ Most believers can receive, on principle, that God loves them. He has to, God loves everybody. Very true, He does, but that’s not what this means. Jesus is referring to the way

¹⁸ Rev.21:11

¹⁹ 1 Cor.2:12

²⁰ 1 Cor.2:9-10

²¹ Jn.17:23

in which God loves, not the fact that God loves. *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*²² God doesn’t love on principle, God loves with all of His heart. When God loves, He *“puts His foot into it.”* He loves with everything He has, and His love has flavor, it has qualities, properties and characteristics. He is a being, He has an essence, He has a personality. He is affectionate, He is gentle, patient and tender. His love provokes Him to anger, He has a real thing for justice, and for beauty too. He sings, dances and wars. He creates, He destroys, He encourages, and He rebukes. God became a man that we might enter into the knowledge of this One, and that we might be transformed into His image -that we would be the recipients of this wild love and love Him back wildly in return!

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”*²³ This text from the apostle Paul lends to a marvelous understanding of the love of God offered to us through the person of Christ. Let me offer a paraphrase of the first section, verse three, *“Let us praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for He has acted kindly toward us in that He has made available every spiritual benefit in the heavenly by way of our union with Jesus.”* Seventeenth century Puritan pastor and writer, Stephen Charnock, notes in his work, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, *“God is a Spirit; that is, he hath nothing corporeal, no mixture of matter, not a visible substance, a bodily form. He is a Spirit... Every nature delights in that which is like it, and distastes that which is most different from it. If God were corporeal, he might be pleased with the victims of beasts, and the beautiful magnificence of temples, and the noise of music; but being a Spirit, he cannot be gratified with carnal things; he demands something better and greater than all those,—that soul which he made, that soul which he hath endowed, a spirit of a frame suitable to his nature. He indeed appointed sacrifices, and a temple, as shadows of those things which were to be most acceptable to him in the Messiah, but they were imposed only ‘till the time of reformation.’”*²⁴ Charnock distinguishes between the spirit-essence of God and the types and shadows of the way in which corporeal, or bodily, humanity worships Him. He accepts our humble acts of worship, incomplete as they may

²² Eph.3:17-19

²³ Eph.1:3-4

²⁴ Charnock, S. (1853). [*The Existence and Attributes of God*](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 178–179). Robert Carter & Brothers.

be, but *“in the heavenly”* that is, in the realm in which God dwells, He has made available to us every benefit of His spiritual essence. Because we have been joined together with Christ, we begin, even in this age, to have access to a world of existence that is barely describable by the human tongue. All of the glories of a spirit-God will one day reverberate within the human spirit, surging and then bursting forth in expressions yet unimagined! This is our inheritance in Him -splendor unimaginable and uncontainable forever! Paul writes that God has chosen us from before the worlds were formed to be sanctified to Him for this purpose, holy and without defilement, in love. In other words, once the beneficiaries of the work of the cross, now united with Christ, that is, one spirit with Him, we have been set apart for the exclusivity of love’s design. In this age, loving God includes great difficulty and even suffering as we endure the resistance of evil men and the work of demons for the gospel’s sake. We are to be co-laborers with God. In the age to come though, we are freed from the bondage of sin, sickness and satan. There are no hindrances to love, no sin nature seeking to pull us in the opposite direction, no worry or fear, no seeing through a glass darkly, no doubts, no confusion about God’s ability and commitment toward us -none of that. In fact, it’s the opposite. *“That we would be set before Him in love.”* Discovering the delight of God will be our consuming passion forever but it is a reality that God longs to bring us into in the present tense. *Oh, that we would know Him, the beautiful God!*

“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.”

-Song of Solomon 8:6-7

