

## The Christmas Spirit – Part 1

Ps 8:4

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

KJV

As Sandra and I walked along the coast each morning in San Diego, we thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful scenery. We also enjoyed observing the people.

It was apparent how important relationships are to people in California. Everywhere people were in pairs. There were those who walked alone or ate alone. But they were the exception. Even the majority of the homeless had somebody.

We met one young fellow from Connecticut. He was a bar tender. He came to San Diego to experience California. He stayed in San Diego because he met a young lady.

It is amazing what people will do for a relationship. They will leave their father and mother. They will leave their extended family. They will leave their home. They will travel great distances.

Look at what Jacob did for Rachel.

Relationships are so important to people that if they become misguided and deceived, people will leave their spouse and break the heart of their children for the sake of a relationship. They will be disloyal to their loyal parents and friends for the sake of a relationship.

God created us with this passion for relationships. It was God who said it is not good for man to be alone.

Gen 2:18

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

KJV

Only those people who have been severely damaged by Satan and sin totally reclude themselves from personal relationships.

God made us in His image. God created us with a passion for relationships because He has that passion. If your image of God is an impersonal being that created us to carry out some impersonal purpose, you have believed a lie.

God has a passion for relationships. It is amazing what God will do for the sake of a relationship.

Our capacity for personal relationships is very limited. If we make specific personal relationships a priority, we will be very limited in the number of these relationships we can have with others.

God's capacity for relationships is infinite. He is omnipresent. He is omniscient. His power is unlimited. He is not limited to time or space. His relationship with you can always be His main priority.

This caused the Psalmist to say...

Ps 8:4

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?  
KJV

God is so mindful of you that the Psalmist also said...

Ps 139:1-18

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

KJV

Another way of saying that God has a passion to have a personal relationship with you is to say, "God loves you."

To say that you love someone means that you are willing to make sacrifices for their sake. It means that you are willing to give of yourself to meet their needs even if they do not give you anything in return.

But how meaningful is love if the person who loves does not have a passion to have personal relationship with the one who is loved?

The bible says that God loves us and that love is His agape love.

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

KJV

But the bible also says that God loves us and that love is His phileo love.

John 16:26-27

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.KJV

Do you believe that God has a passion for a personal relationship with you? Do you believe that God will make great sacrifices for the sake of His personal relationship with you?

This truth is one of the truths that make the Christian faith so appealing. You cannot share this truth with others if you do not believe it for yourself.

This truth is difficult to believe. There are so many people. There is so much suffering in the world.

It is especially difficult to believe when you are the one who is suffering and your prayers don't seem to make a difference!

Have you ever had a need and made an appeal to an authority and they did not respond? They did not even acknowledge that they received your request. It did not make you feel like they cared about a personal relationship with you.

Those are trials of faith in your relationship with God. Like the Psalmist you will say.

Ps 10:1

10:1 Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

KJV

Ps 22:1-2

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

KJV

What will you believe? Why will you believe what you believe?

Christmas is a reminder to us of why we believe what we believe?

God has a passion to have a personal relationship with us. He made a sacrifice that we cannot calculate for the sake of that relationship.

This is the meaning of Christmas. God gave His son. Born of a virgin, the son of God became the son of man.

He lived a sinless life so He could pay for your sins. As your representative, He became your substitute. He satisfied the divine decree against you.

He removed the barrier that separated you from Him; because He loves you; but also because He has a passion to have a personal relationship with you for all of eternity.

Yesterday, Sandra and I started celebrating Christmas. We cranked up the Christmas music thru out our house and spent the majority of the day working together to put up our Christmas decorations in our home. There is the green tree and garland that represents our new life in Christ. There are the red bows that represent the blood that Christ shed so that we could have that new life. There are the lights that represent the fact that Christ is the light of the world and the light of our world. There are the nativity scenes that represent how Christ humbled himself to be our savior.

In the midst of our celebration, we made a special trip to Hobby Lobby to buy an important item that we thought was needed to complete our celebration. It is a beautiful wreath that represents the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when he paid for our sins. We placed it above our fire place in the most prominent place in our house. There are two spot lights that shine on this wreath so that everyone who enters will see it.

We have chosen what we will believe and why we will believe it, in the midst of our suffering. How about you? Do you have the Christmas spirit?

Having faith is easier when everything is going well and it appears God is granting all your requests. It is easier for Sandra and I to have faith this year than it was for us to have faith last year.

Faith is always a moral decision. It is a more difficult moral decision when you are suffering. You must decide what you will believe and why will you believe it.

Christmas is a great time to remember what we believe and why we believe it. Will you join us this year?

(Sing "Oh Come Let Us Adore Him" for the invitation.)