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## Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

January 18, 2015

Negotiating With God

*“But God shows His love for us,  
because while we were still sinners Christ died for us.”*  
Romans 5:8 (Common English Bible)

I amaze myself how often I find myself bargaining with God. Two theological degrees should have taught me better. Yet, I tend to forget the simple teaching of this scripture – that God shows love for us while we are sinners. The question is, if God demonstrates love when I don't deserve it, just what is it do I expect by bargaining with God? Most of us are guilty of this kind of bargaining.

There is a good reason for this kind of negotiating with God. It is how the world works - you do me this favor and I will do you that favor. Children seem to learn this at a very early age. And if that is how the world works, we naturally assume that the same is true for God. Trouble is God's ways are not our ways. God is not manipulated. God gives no more and no less attention to anyone.

Certainly this truth removes any hope for leveraging ourselves with God. While that may seem strange in a world like ours, it does present us with some good news. It also means that God couldn't be more in love with us. We already have all the love God can give. Additionally, this teaching tells us something of the character of God. God's love is not rooted in what is fair and just. God's love is rooted only in His nature to be merciful.

Actually, this knowledge of God's character gives great freedom. If we don't have to leverage God, to bargain or negotiate with God, we can then draw a deep breath, relax and consider how we might live in gratitude. It seems that this is a better way to live. Negotiating always leaves uncertainty. Life is lived in hopefulness. But since we have already received God's love, we may now live simply enjoying God's love.

*Prayer: Quiet my anxiety, Heavenly Father, and remind me again of the simple truth that Your love for me is already present. In the Name of Jesus, I pray, Amen.*

Doug Hood

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