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## Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

December 1, 2013

God Only Had One Plan For Us

*“Everything came into being through the Word.”*

John 1:3 (Common English Bible)

Reading the Bible with understanding often requires paying attention to the details. An example is in this brief passage – “the Word” is theological speak that simply means Jesus Christ.” Hence, when reading this passage what we understand is that everything came into being through Jesus Christ. That is a more direct translation but I am glad that the theological jargon is preserved. Sometimes the richness and texture of a passage is lost when translators over-simplify. Spoken words often tell us a great deal about the person speaking them. They clue us in on whether the person speaking is well educated or not, gracious toward others or self-absorbed, as well as a great deal about the person’s core values. What we discover in this passage is that Jesus Christ is actually “the Word” of God embodied; that Jesus in fact shows us God.

There is another detail in this brief passage that is equally important – and one that, properly grasped, is simply the good news of the Gospel summarized: Jesus Christ was part of God’s plan for us since the beginning of time! It is often incorrectly presumed that Jesus is God’s “Plan B” when “Plan A” failed. Plan A, of course, is that we would be perfectly obedient to God and never need a savior. That puts a great deal of pressure upon us and produces considerable guilt when we stumble. Unfortunately, there are many churches today that advance the “Plan A” theory and, consequently, their members move through the faith journey weighed down with guilt. That is an injustice to the Gospel, an injustice to the character of God.

As the church begins the celebration of the Advent Season, a closer examination of this brief passage is in order. What the church is really celebrating is the goodness of a God that chose “*from the beginning of time*” that God’s people not live with guilt. “The Word” was there from the beginning so that, rather than guilt, we may live in gratitude that though we may sin, nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of our creator.

*Thank You Heavenly Father for the joy of this season – the truth that because of Your love for us, from the beginning of time, we may live confident of Your pleasure in us. Amen.*

Doug Hood