

N U R T U R E
F A I T H
with
Dr. W. Douglas Hood, Jr.

February 11, 2018

She's With Me

READ: John 17:24 (Common English Bible)

“Father, I want those you gave me to be with me where I am.”

REFLECT:

She's With Me, a song recorded by Canadian country music duo High Valley, is an up-tempo piece that sparkles with influences of bluegrass. Written by Seth Mosley, Brad Rempel, and Ben Stennis, the song blends banjo instrumentation and captivating lyrics that I find to be infectious – a song that adds energy and lift to my morning runs. A beautiful and heart-felt love song, *She's With Me* expresses adoration of the highest magnitude for a woman the narrator believes is “out of his league.” This song has been added to my personal canon of country songs that expresses my love and admiration for my wife, Grace – words so beautifully and powerfully expressive that I wish I had written them.

Particularly poignant, for me personally, is the refrain: “Ain't she amazing, amazing, out of my league? And ain't it crazy, crazy, she happened to me? She calls me baby, baby, hard to believe. That she's, yea she's with me.” Careful attention to this brief refrain exposes three movements of thought. The first is the honest realization that the woman in the narrative is absolutely “out of his league.” Second, the nearly unbelievable – yet, nonetheless true – fact that this woman addresses the narrator affectionately: “She calls me baby, baby.” As the narrator continues, this level of affection is “hard to believe.” Finally, is the clear declaration and celebration that this woman who is beyond anything the narrator deserves is nevertheless “with me.”

Our sentence of scripture above is from a longer prayer of our Lord, Jesus Christ. In a deeply moving talk with his heavenly Father, Jesus has captured the refrain from *She's With Me*. The first two movements are implicit. The narrator, naturally, is Jesus. The Son of God is, unquestionably, “out of our league.” Yet, Jesus is not ashamed to identify us to his Father. Also implicit is the affection Jesus expresses for us not only in this brief excerpt but throughout the seventeenth chapter – the entire chapter is one long prayer. And then the third movement, unmistakable and deeply surprising, “I want those you gave me to be with me where I am.”

In one of his books, Michael B. Brown, senior minister of Marble Collegiate Church in New York City, speaks of another man, also by the name of Michael.¹ Serving a prison sentence for his activity in organized crime, another inmate invites Michael to turn his “big problems” over to God. Michael's response is to laugh with disbelief that God would have anything to do with him: “What have I ever done that would get God on my side?” The other inmate replies, “That's the beauty of it. God is on your side before you do the first thing to get him there.” It is unbelievable – even unimaginable – that Jesus would climb down from the heavenly places to be with the likes of us, even to say to his Heavenly Father that he wants us to be with him where he is. But, that is the message of the Gospel. And because of that, we can turn to the world that never ceases to bring us down and destroy us and, pointing to the Son of God, say, “He's With Me.”

¹ Michael B. Brown, **A Five-Mile Walk: Exploring Themes in the Experience of Christian Faith and Discipleship** (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc.; 2016), 64.

RESPOND:

1. How has this scripture or meditation spoken to you?

2. What insight can you apply to your life this week?

3. What one specific act do you intend to take, an attitude to change, a person to see, or prayer to pray?

PRAY:

Teach me to love and give myself to others in the same extravagant manner as you have loved me. Amen.