
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

March 23, 2014

God's Intention For Us

"We are called to be an honor to God's glory because we were the first to hope in Christ." Ephesians 1:12 (Common English Bible)

Some years ago, there was a delightful Hallmark Card commercial that portrayed two adult sisters in a Hallmark Card store. They caught each other in some gesture and looked at one another in surprise and exclaimed, "We've become our mother!" Perhaps more than any of us may want, we do bear the likeness or image of our parents, both physically and in our manner. As someone once said to me when I was quite young, "There is no question whose son you are. I bet you make your daddy proud everyday." I had never thought of that before; do I, in fact, make my father proud?

This one sentence from the Apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus speaks to God's intention for His people – that they live in a manner that brings honor to God. This can be daunting. Any honest self-evaluation of our lives reveals that a radical transformation is required before anyone sees anything of God's glory in us. Perhaps the word "daunting" is an understatement. Do any of us have the capacity to live in a manner that brings honor to God's Name?

I believe not. The chasm between the glory and holiness of God and the day to day behavior of our lives is simply too great. Our experience is more like that of the prophet Isaiah when, in the sixth chapter of his book, he comes into the presence of God and realizes just how far removed from God his life is, "Mourn for me; I'm ruined!" Now that is honesty! What are we to do?

Fortunately there is more packed into this one sentence than God's expectation of us; there is God's promise of help. Our hope to ever bring honor to God is not in our strength or ability. It is in Christ. The radical reorientation that is required comes from Christ, from fixing our eyes on Christ. Think of it this way. Not one of us has the capacity to transform a seed into anything more. We know from our own experience of nature that a single seed has within it the potential to become more; to become a beautiful flower, a stately shrub or a towering tree. But all we can do is place it deep within rich, moist soil. After that another power takes over. It is the same with our lives. Plant ourselves deep into the person of Jesus Christ and a power not our own works a spiritual change within us. Our transformation into the likeness of God is not our work; it is Christ's work.

From my perspective, "in Christ" far outstrips the title "Christian." The latter allows for ambiguous interpretation; allows for the possibility of little more than a weak affinity or relationship with Christ. But "in Christ" is far more dynamic. It speaks of taking up residence in the person of Christ in such a way that His life becomes ours. It is then that others will notice, without any doubt, that we bear a distinct resemblance to a great and holy God.

Fix our eyes clearly on Jesus, O Lord. Give us Jesus. We ask for no more. We need no more. Amen.

Doug Hood