

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 3:16)

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ Our most Lovable Heavenly Father

The most authoritative teaching on God the Father. Jesus says no one knows God the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him (cf. Matthew 11:27). Nicodemus was highly privileged. Jesus taught him about the Heavenly Father. Nicodemus was an elite member of the Jewish community, a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish ruling council. But he was different from his peers. He had a genuine love for God in his heart, and could discern that Jesus is from God. He was afraid of the reaction of the Jews and so came to Jesus in the middle of the night. With Nicodemus, Jesus could speak freely and simply. He taught him a most important lesson that night: *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.* This is the crux of our Christian faith. In this short statement on God the Father, we can learn a few profound truths about God the Father from the very lips of His own Divine Son, Jesus.

God has many wondrous divine attributes but Jesus chooses to emphasize the love of His Heavenly Father. Jesus did not speak much about the Heavenly Father's unsurpassed glory, infinite power, vast dominion, awesome majesty and sovereignty which myriads and myriads adore and administer to in heaven. Instead, Jesus simply tells us His Father loves the world so much that He sends His only Son as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of all. John the Evangelist would continue Christ's revelation of the God the Father: God is love itself (cf. 1 John 4:8). He is the source of pure love. A person loves not out of his/her own inherent goodness but because God's Spirit poured love into his/her heart (cf. Romans 5:5). Thus, we are able to love because God first loves us and gives us the Holy Spirit who pours love into our hearts.

As a divine parent, God the Father has at the top of His mind the eternal welfare of each and every one of His children.

As our Eternal Father, God has been Father since eternity. It was Jesus who taught the disciples to call God "Father" (cf. Luke 11:2). From the beginning, God the Father has decided happily to make us His sons and daughters in Christ through the Spirit of adoption (cf. Ephesians 1:5). It was through His Holy Spirit that we are able to cry out: "Abba, Father" (cf. Romans 8:15). *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Romans 8:16).* What a wonderful thought: God loves us so much He made us His children! This is our inalienable God-given right and highest dignity which no one can take away from us unless we choose not to accept the promises of God who desires everyone to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4). That is why God the Father sent Jesus to our world even though He knows in advance how much Jesus will suffer in His plan of salvation for the world.

As in the case of a loving human parent, God the Father is totally engrossed in the lives of His children. We are very precious to Him. He proves this by sending us Jesus, and keeps forgiving us our sins whenever we repent. He is constantly thinking about us. *How precious to me are Your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand (Psalm 139:17-18).* He is not distant and cold as some who do not have a personal relationship with Him assume Him to be. He knows even the minute details of our life. *Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Matthew 10:30).* He is always with us and keeps a record of all our tears (cf. Psalm 56:8).

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, thank You for revealing to us our most loveable Heavenly Father. You and Him are One. When we see You, we see God the Father. For in You, God was pleased to dwell in His fullness. Give us a true and lively devotion to our Heavenly Father with a good insight into His love when He sent You to us for the redemption of the world. May we delight in Him as He delights in us. His greatest desire is our salvation so that each and every one of His children can finally be united in heaven (cf. Ephesians 1:10). It is for this grand divine purpose that we have been lovingly created – to be part of His loving family. Give us Your love for His divine will so that we will always have You for our guide in our earthly pilgrimage to our Heavenly Father who has planned things for us so wondrous that no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the mind ever imagined (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9). Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us that we may be made worthy of God's promises. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk