

The Wednesday Word, December 4, 2019: The Heart of Jesus

In my young days in Northern Ireland, I often saw pictures of what was called, 'The Sacred Heart of Jesus' hanging on kitchen walls. Without wishing to be offensive to my Roman Catholic friends, I must admit that I found those wall hangings quite goulish and oftentimes frightening. Apparently, if a home was to display this chilling picture, the family would earn favour from God. What a terrible doctrine!

The truth is, Jesus' heart is discovered in the gospel, not in framed pictures. For example, we find Jesus depicted in Luke 10:30-35 as the Good Samaritan. After the priest and the Levite had passed by the poor, half-murdered man, the Good Samaritan came where he was, bound up his wounds, poured in oil and wine, set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, took care of him, paid all his expenses, and promised to return. What a glimpse of the heart of Jesus.

He is the one who comes where we are, binds up our wounds, takes care of us, pays our debt of sin and promises to return for us. Isn't He lovely?

We find the same heart of Jesus in John 4:4 when He purposed to travel into the unwelcoming Samaritan territory to bring salvation to the worst woman in the district. Remember how it was said of Him, "He must needs go through Samaria." **He must needs**—He was impelled and propelled by the love in His heart. He had been walking under the glare of a hot Eastern sun, where a man couldn't find his own shadow. But look at Him, warily trudging all those hard miles, to rescue that poor, profligate, Samaritan woman.

What a revelation of the heart of Jesus and thus a revelation of the heart of God! Isn't He lovely?

This is the same Jesus who at later time came down the right street and stopped at the right place and looked up into the right tree and spoke to Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5). Yes, Jesus showed us His heart when He came looking for that crooked little money-grubber. He came, however, not to punish him or beat him, but to go home and dine with him. Isn't He lovely?

This again is the same Jesus who, by His love, melted the heart of the woman, who was a sinner (see Luke 7:36-48). Jesus was invited to the right house on the right night so that the woman, who was a sinner, could wash His feet with her tears of repentance.

Go where you will through the gospels and look at Jesus. He's seeking to save the lost, the last, the least and the left behind. (Luke 19:10), and He's still doing it. The Lord is not passively waiting for people to come to Him. He is seeking sinners. That's why, as we walk with Him, we learn how to bring the gospel to our friends and family and those He brings into our path.

"He left the radiant throne above,
Stooped down to bleed and die,
To meet the need of ruined man,
What love with this can vie?"

The Pharisees mockingly said of Him, "This man receives sinners"(Luke 15:2), ... and they were

right. " This man [Jesus] receives sinners." He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"(Luke 5:32).

He, out of deep love and pity, left heaven's glory, and came to seek and to save that which was lost. That's the heart of God! He came searching for His people, His lost sheep. That's the heart of God! Nothing turned Him aside and nothing daunted Him.

That's the heart of Jesus for us.

And that's the Gospel Truth!