

Naomi

We are all familiar with the story of Ruth. John Troyer was out at ISOT and ministered last Sunday. I was getting a word out of what he shared. What he shared was also good. He said the Book of Ruth should be called the Book of Naomi. Keeping it to that context in the first maybe twenty verses of the book, it says Naomi's husband was named Elimelech. Elimelech means "God is my King." Naomi's name means "lovely." They had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. There was a famine in the land, so they went to a foreign land. While they were there, her two sons married daughters of foreigners. I think it was Moab, so both of their wives were Moabitesses. One was named Orpha and the other was Ruth. Ruth means "friend."

While John Troyer was talking, he said, "Who wouldn't consider that 'God is my King' marrying 'Lovely' wouldn't have a wonderful future?" Mahlon means "sickly" and Chilion means "pining" – pinning being always the victim. Who would consider that "God is my King" and "Lovely" would bring forth two sons "Sickly" and "Pining?" What God is causing us to understand is "God is my King" means that I am governed by something that is over me. Paul was very clear on this. He said that a son though he is heir of all is under tutors and governors until the time of the Father. Although we start out with God as our King (and He never gets off His throne), until we get to know Him as Father, anything that comes forth out of God being our King is still going to be sickly and pinning. So God is my King joined to the most lovely thing you can imagine – the best situation, the best circumstance, born again, baptized in the Holy Ghost, the biggest congregation that raises the roof off the building by the intensity of praise, gets the biggest offerings – is destined for disaster. It isn't that God isn't willing to be our King, but what's in His heart is that He wants to become our Father. God's intent is not just to govern us so that we do what's right, but His real purpose is to take what we are born as by natural birth and cause it to become a son, to work in us by the Spirit as a son to bring us to an full expression of His life.

There is still a majority of theologians on this planet today that believe that when it says in Genesis, "Let us make man in our image" and then follows with "so in the image of God made He him, male and female created He them," that at that point in history in Genesis – as the fulfillment of what it says, "Let us make man in our image" – that Adam in the garden, before sin, and therefore in some sense, us in the world by our first birth (of Adam) are in the image of God. What was revealed then was that God was making a commitment to what He created, to bring it into Christ in the fulfillment of what it says in Ephesians 1, when it says that God's purpose distributed through time is to gather all things, both in heaven and in earth, even in one—in Christ—and then to grow it up to full stature.

When it says in Genesis, “Let us make man,” it wasn’t that at that time God made man in the image of God, but that God was declaring His commitment to bring Adam into Christ so that bringing him into Christ, He would give him the opportunity to partake fully of the divine nature. It is in Christ and only in Christ that God makes things in His image. If you see that clearly, you already know more about the purpose of God than 98% of the theologians that are on this planet today. What God is doing is taking us from our youth where we’re under tutors and governors and that includes the law, it includes instruction and doctrine, it includes the context of the believers; and He is seeking to grow us up in that context enough so that we move out of the sense of obedience to a King into accountability to a Father. His work is actually not so much instructing us in the difference between right and wrong, but there is actually a working in us to bring forth a testimony of His life.

I want to close this morning with this definition. It says, I believe it’s in Revelation, that when God opens the door, no man may close it and when God closes the door, no man may open it. This is not to give us a picture of a long hallway with doors opening and closing. What it is saying is that in Adam, there is not an open door and no man can open it. But in Christ, there is an open door and no man can close it. That is what makes every morning new. That is what makes mercy our confidence toward God.

Now, could that be taken to breed sloppy grace? Yes, but if our intent is to become governed by His purpose, then we begin to understand what it means that God hates a mixture and that the work of the Spirit is to separate us from Adam by the life of Christ coming to the front and then finish His work as we come to “God is my Father.” That is the purpose of salvation. “God is my King” sounds great. Most of Christianity is tied up with “God is my King,” but under the best of circumstances, it brings that which is sickly and pining. Only “God is my Father” will be successful.

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