

Chapter Five

The Cross and the Father's Heart

There is perhaps no symbol in human history more recognized than the cross.

It hangs from necklaces.

It stands upon church steeples.

It is carved into stone, painted onto canvas, and carried into places of suffering throughout the world.

Yet for all its familiarity, perhaps we have still not fully asked its most important question.

What does the cross reveal about God?

For centuries, much of the conversation has centered upon what happened at the cross.

Necessary questions.

Important questions.

Questions worthy of careful reflection.

But before we ask what happened...

Perhaps we should first ask what was seen.

Because Jesus Himself said,

“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Myself.”

Lifted up for what purpose?

To reveal the Father.

Throughout His life Jesus had been answering one question.

What is God like?

Every healing was an answer.

Every embrace was an answer.

Every act of forgiveness was an answer.

Every shared meal was an answer.

Then came the cross.

If everything Jesus had done revealed the Father, then surely the cross cannot reveal someone different.

The cross is not an interruption of God's character.

It is its fullest unveiling.

Look carefully.

The Father does not answer hatred with hatred.

Violence is not conquered by greater violence.

Love absorbs what evil inflicts without surrendering to its spirit.

This is divine strength unlike anything the world had imagined.

Human empires establish themselves through power.

The Kingdom of God reveals itself through self-giving love.

The world crowns kings with gold.

Love wears a crown of thorns.

The world protects itself by destroying enemies.

Love stretches out its hands and prays,

“Father, forgive them.”

If we wish to know what omnipotence looks like, we need only look toward Calvary.

Power refuses retaliation.

Holiness refuses contempt.

Mercy refuses abandonment.

Justice refuses indifference.

Love refuses to stop loving.

The cross does not persuade the Father to become merciful.

It reveals the mercy that has always lived within the Father’s heart.

Nor does it reveal a divided God, as though one part desired wrath while another pleaded for compassion.

The Father and the Son are not standing on opposite sides of humanity.

Together they stand against everything that destroys humanity.

The cross is not the collision of justice and love.

It is their perfect harmony.

Justice is not abandoned.

It is fulfilled through restorative love.

Mercy is not sentimentality.

It is love entering the deepest wounds of creation in order to heal them from within.

This is why Jesus refuses to answer violence with violence.

Had He done so, He would simply have confirmed the world's oldest belief—that power ultimately belongs to whoever can inflict the greatest harm.

Instead, He unveils another Kingdom.

A Kingdom where forgiveness is stronger than revenge.

Where humility is greater than domination.

Where death itself cannot extinguish life.

At Calvary, humanity finally sees what has always been true.

The Father is exactly like Jesus.

He has always been.

The One who walked through Eden calling,

“Where are you?”

is the same One who now speaks from a cross,

“Father, forgive them.”

The voice has never changed.

Only our ability to hear it.

Perhaps this is why the veil was torn.

Not merely because heaven had opened.

But because every false image of God had begun to unravel.

The God whom many feared to approach had stepped into our suffering.

The Holy One had entered our violence.

The Creator had embraced His creation, even as His creation rejected Him.

This is not defeat.

This is Love refusing to become anything other than Love.

And once we have seen that Love...

Fear begins to lose its voice.

Shame begins to loosen its grip.

Hiding no longer makes sense.

The journey back to Eden does not begin when we become worthy.

It begins when we finally believe what the cross has always been saying.

“You have never been beyond the reach of My love.”

Perhaps that has always been the message written in the wounds of Christ.

Not merely that God can forgive.

But that God has never ceased moving toward His beloved.

And once Love has been seen for what it truly is...

The only reasonable response is to step out from behind the trees.

I AM still here...

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