

Living in the overflow of God's love

Love... Endures All Things

Lesson 14

Joke: story about these two farmers and one of the farmers bought two horses but found that he couldn't tell them apart. So he called his other farmer buddy over I've got these two horses that I just can't tell them apart. Could you come over and help me? So he came over and he measured them, and weighed them, and looked at their teeth and examined everything he could until finally he backed up and said, "you know, I may be wrong but it seems to me that the white horse is about 2 inches taller than the black horse.

You know, if you think about it, we can be guilty of the same thing. We can be guilty of missing the answer to the question that is the most obvious. My hope is we come to this lesson with our ears wide open and look for the obvious.

Prayer

He could have given up you know. No one would have ever known. Jesus simply could have said, that's it, I'm done!

Imagine Jesus pondering being in the womb. Jesus, is as unrestrained as the flow of water and as limitless as the stars. Would Jesus really reduce himself and leave all the splendor he enjoys as God in order to enter the world through the belly of a young maiden for 9 months?

I mean, 9 months! Is Jesus really willing to consider being governed by months? In heaven there are no months. It's not that there's no time in heaven, it's that heaven has all the time. We in our human condition are the ones who are governed by time, because time is running out. In fact, our time passes by so quickly; we even measure it by the seconds and milliseconds. Wouldn't Jesus rather stay on the other side of time?

Jesus could have done anything he wanted. Jesus could have quit! He could have given up. And if not completely given up, he could have stopped short. I mean, did Jesus really need to become flesh (human)? Have you thought about what it means to become flesh?

Bill Cosby- Time Flies- "I wonder as I wander"

Bill speaks about the difficulties of being human (especially a 50 year old man)

There are few moments in life more damaging to your self-esteem than to leave a football game, a supermarket, or a mall and forget not only where you left your car but where you left your mind because you can not [even] remember which car [you brought with you].

And so, you start to wander around in the wilderness, trying to conceal that you are looking for a car whose make has become foreign to you; it's on the tip of your mind, that pointy little place. [You have to conceal that you are looking for something you handle everyday-- a car-- a four door.

"When you parked the car, you had said to your mind, "Okay, now take this down: we're a blue Valiant parked in A2.""

And your mind had replied, got it. Have fun shopping.

So off you went, even walking backward part of the way to remember exactly how your car looked and exactly where it was.

And for the next few minutes or hours, you keep interrupting your shopping to reassure yourself that nothing is simpler to remember than A2 Valiant. You even made up a little poem to fix the picture in your mind:

Roses are red,
Valliant's are blue,
An A1 car
In row A2.

When you leave the mall, however, you find that this verse has taken wings and in its place is a less-winged one:

Roses are red,
My car must be near.
Am I insured?
For losing it here?

People like me need a cute little yellow sign in the back window of their cars:

NOBODY ON BOARD

Did Jesus really need to become flesh?

Why not simply come as light? That's a pretty good idea. I can see it now... Heaven opens up, and Jesus could descend upon the earth in rays of white light. And it could even be more dramatic than light. There could be this grand voice, like a boom and like thunder. There could be torrents of wind and a chorus of angels in the background and then the whole world would notice.

Ironically, in the real world, Christ did come, and hardly anyone noticed. The little town of Bethlehem had no parade or celebration. Why, you'd think a holiday would be fit for such an occasion as this.

Then there's that stable thing. This is another pretty good reason to throw-in-the-towel don't you think? Stables are pretty smelly dirty places. Stables don't have pretty floors and clean air to breath. I mean, how are they even going to cut the umbilical cord anyway? Who is going to cut the umbilical cord? Joseph? Will it be the small time carpenter from a "nowheresville" town? Isn't there a better choice for the father of the Christ? Maybe someone who is educated, comes from a good family, has influence in the community. Here's a guy who couldn't manage to get a decent place for Mary to give birth.

Jesus could have given up! Look at the changes he would have to make... Emptying himself and becoming human.

Last year while I was working in my garden, I noticed, at least at the time, what I thought were bees flying all around me. Now bees are really good for a garden, but they were flying all around my head and scaring me a little. In fact there were so many of them, I figured there had to be a nest close by. Well, my perceptions were mostly correct. I found a nest all right. It was a hornet's nest (Bald faced Hornets) about the size of a regulation WNBA basketball and it was located within just a few feet from where I was gardening. This of course was pretty uncomfortable for me. I don't particularly care for hornets and they also happened to be in the very bad spot. Of all the places they could have nested, they picked the worst place to live. We have 1.3 acres of land with woods and water and all.

They could have easily nested in places that would have been much safer for their own survival. It would have been nice to be able to relocate the nest, but this wouldn't happen. It would have been great if I could have gotten close enough to them and ask them to pick up their nest and follow me... to a safe place. As I think about it now, I suppose the only thing I could have done was to become one of them so that I could help them see that they were a threat and that they were in a poor location, which would utterly cause their destruction. I would need to go from 5'10" to less than an inch. From 205lbs to less than a once. I would have to leave my big world for their tiny one. I would have to give up what humans do and enjoy to what hornets do. What do hornets do? Well, they eat other insects and drink tree sap. Frankly, I say no way! I want my burgers not insects! And besides what about my garden!

Love really goes the distance. Jesus traveled from heaven, a timeless place to be governed by time here in order to become one of us. Jesus didn't have to do this. Jesus could have easily given up. At any time during his time here, he could have thrown-in-towel.

When he saw the size of the womb he would have to be in... he could have stopped it right there. When Jesus saw how tiny he would be. How dependent as a baby he would be, how hungry he would be, he could have quit. At the first whiff of that stinky stable, at the first gust of cold air. At the first time he fell and scraped his knees or had a cold or tasted bad food he could have walked out.

When Jesus saw the dirt floor of the house he'd live in Nazareth, or when Joseph give Jesus a chore, or when his fellow students where dozing off during the reading of the Torah, his Torah. When the lazy farmer blamed God for his poor crop. At any point this could have been it for Jesus. At any time during these moments Jesus could have thrown in the towel and gone back to eternity. But... he didn't.

Jesus didn't give up because he is love. And Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 13:7 that love endures all things. Jesus endured the distance. And even more impressive, Jesus endured the resistance.

John tells us "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." **John 1:14, NIV.**

What did John see in Jesus anyway? No doubt his love and compassion and passion would have definitely been noteworthy. Surely John had also seen the glory of Jesus as he dealt with the bully from Hell!

•When the storm whirled around the boat Jesus and his followers where on-- When that storm scared his followers enough for them to question Jesus' love and concern for them-- his glory shown as he stood and spoke "Be still!"

•When the death of a man broke the hearts of his sisters; Jesus stood before a tomb and let his glory show as he spoke the words "Come forth!"

•When disease stole the joy of a man; Jesus touched this leper with power and said, "Be healed!"

John must have smiled and remembered things like this when he wrote, "We beheld his glory!" Obviously there were a few like John who recognized Jesus' glory. But most others didn't see it. They totally missed it. Notice how others reacted to his coming in glory:

- *"They laughed at him."* **Matt. 9:24**
- *"Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"* **Jo 10:20**
- *"Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads"* **Mark 15:29**
- *"The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus."* **Luke 16:14**
- *Isaiah prophesied that Jesus' coming into the world would look like this: "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."* **Isaiah 53:3**
- *And John tells us that (the Scripture reading) "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."* **John 1:10,11**

Do you now see what I mean when I say that Jesus could have thrown-in-the-towel; that Jesus could have quit and given up? But we know that he didn't. Why?

Jesus didn't give up because his love for his children was far greater than the pain of coming into this world. Jesus came to rescue you. When Jesus came into your life, you were dead (**Eph. 2:4-5**) "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved."

Love is the reason that Jesus could endure the distance between heaven and reaching us. "Love... endures all things!"

Love is what led Jesus to the incarnation (To become human). "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." **2 Corinthians 5:21**

Why would Jesus become human? Why would Jesus become our sin? There's only one reason... LOVE!

The love of Jesus "bears all things." The love of Jesus "believes all things." The love of Jesus "hopes all things." and the love of Jesus "endures all things."

Think about that for a little bit. Come and drink deeply... don't just sip it, gulp it! Let the love of Jesus cover all things in your life.

- All those secrets
- The hurts
- The hours of evil
- Days of worry

God's love will cover all this!

- Your pride
- Broken promises
- Every drug taken
- Every penny stolen
- Every foul word
- And every harsh word spoke

God's love covers all things!

Psa 103:2-4 "Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion"

Living in the overflow of God's love will cover you completely. Let God's love cover you... for His sake and for the glory of His name. Live in the overflow of God's love for your sake... for the peace of

your heart. Live in the overflow of God's love for the sake of those in your life and for those he places in your life... Live in the overflow of God's love so that it can overflow into the lives of others.

Scot Poirier

Minister

Chelmsford Church of Christ

205 North St.

Chelmsford Ma.

978-256-8901