

Sacrifice Series 7

THE FATHER IN FLESH

Sacrifice Series 7:
THE FATHER IN FLESH

Sept. 21, 2014

Congregational reading: John 14:1-12 NKJV

Sermon in a sentence: When God our Father calls us to sacrifice, we see Him ahead of us, modeling the way.

Scriptures: John 14:6-12, 20

John 14:1-12 NKJV “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.” ⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” ⁸ Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. ¹² “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

Understanding God’s divine nature and state of being is often a challenge for us.

From the beginning of His revelation of Himself to humanity, God has stated that He is One (e.g. Gen. 1:27; Deut. 6:4). Indivisible in any way, He cannot be separated, compartmentalized, sectioned or partitioned. He operates in all realms simultaneously, and is never to be considered outside of the constancy, consistency and complete totality of His eternal being. He truly is the great “I AM” (Ex. 3:13-15).

He may be seen to highlight particular roles at particular times, but we must never think that He is one thing but not another at any given time.

His ‘oneness’ means that while He is the Son, He does not cease to be the Father, and while He is the Father, He still operates as the Holy Spirit.

In the “days of His flesh” (Heb. 5:7), He had such a focus on His role as Son of God and Saviour of humanity that He spoke many times as if He was, in fact, separated from the other aspects of His divine being. He speaks in John 14 of asking the Father to send “another Comforter” (v.16). He states that anyone who loves Him will be loved by His Father (v.21) and that that He and His Father will come to live in that individual (v.23).

As a man, Jesus consistently downplayed His divinity and highlighted His humanity. He “... emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant ... being made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7).

At the same time however, God self-identifies in the Old Testament as the coming Redeemer, the one and only Saviour of the world. Isaiah in particular had a lot to say on that topic.

Is. 43:3,10-11,14; Is. 44:24; Is. 45:15,21-22; Is. 49:26. (See also Is. 50:6; **Is. 53; Is. 59:1-2,15-18; Is. 63:8-10,16)**

Is. 45:21-22 NASB “ Declare and set forth *your case*; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And **there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. ²² **“ Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.****

The crucial question to answer in understanding who Jesus is in relation to the Father is this: Did the Father Himself come to save us, as Isaiah so often stated, or did He send someone else? Was Jesus, the Son of God, simply the Father’s deputy, to bear His wrath against human sin? Or was He in fact the “Son [who was] given”, while being, at the very same time “the everlasting Father” (Is. 9:6)?¹

From our understanding of scripture, we would quickly have to say that God the Father did not send a deputy, but came Himself, in human flesh. He was simultaneously the eternal God and creator, and also Jesus Christ, the Son of God, reconciling the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19)!

¹ “God the Father”, “God our Father”, “God and Father” are all strictly NT terms. (Jesus is only recorded once as having used the term “God the Father”: Jn. 6:27). God the Father is the NT God of relationship. The OT speaks of “God”; “the Lord our God”; “the Lord God of our/your father/fathers”; “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”; “the Lord God of Israel”; “your God”; “my God”: primarily the God of history, the God of creation, provision, protection and power.

The Spirit of the almighty God indwelt human flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

.....

Being made in the image and likeness of God, we ourselves are just as Jesus was: spirit indwelt flesh. The Spirit that indwelt *His* flesh, however, was not a sinful human spirit, but the pure, sinless Spirit of the living God. Then, in the reality of His humanity, He bore the penalty for our sins, so we can once again become pure, holy and undefiled, and live eternally in His presence.

.....

For all the things we may have trouble understanding, we must understand and remember this: **our Father came to Earth Himself to save us from sin – He did not delegate the task to someone else. He had the same battles in His flesh that we have in ours. He hated the sin that He had become (2 Cor. 5:21), and His own Spirit poured out His own wrath upon His own flesh and killed it!**

So, in fact, what we see on the cross is this:

2 Cor. 5:21 NASB **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Against this backdrop, let us look again at Jesus' words in John 14.

John 14:6-12 NASB Jesus said to him, **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 7" If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.** 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the

Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” ¹⁰ “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.” ¹¹ “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.” ¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

Interpretive tool:

Whenever Jesus speaks, we always have to ask the question: “Is He speaking as a man, or speaking as God”? He had two natures at work in Himself at all times – complete divinity and complete humanity. And sometimes He spoke out of both realities, switching back and forth in the middle of a conversation, as we see in the passage above.

So, as we seek to determine which side of His nature is being expressed as He speaks, and as we seek to interpret His words correctly, let us keep the following facts in mind:

- Jesus is God. The Father is God. The Holy Spirit is God.
- There is only one God and He is indivisible.
- Therefore, when God interacts with humanity in His three dominant roles as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are still only dealing with the one and only God who manifested Himself in human flesh: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

When Jesus speaks and acts in His humanity as the Son of

God, He speaks and acts exactly as any other human would in relating to God. We speak of God as ‘the divine other’, one outside of ourselves, and so did Jesus!

Thus, when He spoke of His Father, or prayed to His Father, He used the same terminology we would use, although He was at the very same time “the everlasting Father”, the Spirit to whom prayer is made. So we always keep in mind that His flesh, His humanity prayed. He referred to His Father in the third person, although He was Himself the Father in flesh!

.....

As we relate this reality to our consideration of sacrifice, (2014 being our “Year of Sacrifice”), we come to understand that God did not exempt Himself in this area. He came to earth and became a man. He endured the persecution and ridicule of people He could easily have judged and destroyed. He allowed sinful men to shame Him, torture Him, crown Him with thorns and crucify Him. He sacrificed for us, and models the way in which we also should endure the things that come our way.

Our sacrifices for Him must always be accompanied with the joy of knowing that He alone is worthy of our ultimate offerings, and He never leads us to places He has not already gone.