



“God’s Heart Towards Sinners”

Advent 2021

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Fun Question: Would you rather go back to age 5 with everything you know now or know now everything your future self will learn? Why?

1. The problem isn’t so much that we couldn’t meet God’s high moral standard or keep all his rules, but that we wanted to live life on our own terms and therefore actively rebelled against him. This is how the Bible tells us the story of sin, primarily through the language of worship and relationship. Describe what your Christian life is/was like having this misconception that the main storyline of the Bible is that God is primarily a rule maker and that we are rule breakers.
2. “I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’ 2 All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations— 3 a people who continually provoke me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick” - Isaiah 65:1-3

Passages like these describe how our sins grieve the heart of God. In our rejection of God there naturally is a spirit of self-justification and denial that we’re guilty in all of us. Please share when you first started to realize the weight of your own sin towards God and thus entering a time of genuine repentance with the Lord. What that was that like for you?

3. “My people are bent on turning away from me, and though they call out to the Most High, he shall not raise them up at all. 8 How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. 9 I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim (Israel); for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.” Hosea 11:7-9

When we see someone behaving badly, we’re so turned off by them that we pull away in disgust. But as crazy and illogical as it sounds, God comes running to us with a heart of jealous love, longing to see us restored to the people he created us to be. There is a turbulence, a restlessness being stirred within the deepest part of God’s heart because of His affection and longing for his people. God *aches and yearns* for his relationship with his children that has been savaged by sin.

What is the first picture of God when you feel the guilt of your own sin? Whom do you perceive Him to be, in your sin and your suffering? If not the above description of God's heart, then what is it?

What would it take for you to experience the sober reality of God's yearning for you and the rest of His children more frequently? How would that change the way you live your life?

4. Pray for each other that everyone in your group would re-discover and encounter God's true heart for us.

Deeper Study:

1. Take time to read, meditate, and study Psalm 51. What does David's repentance tell you about the character of God?