

The Wonder of it All: The Joy of Thy Salvation

By Mark Jurkovich

This series has been covering some of the countless wonders of God's creation. But the greatest wonder of all is the extent that He went to for our salvation. I touched on it in the "How Great Thou Art" article¹, but it bears a second look, and a third, and... (to always behold his glory!)

Just think, the God who created us and all we see, and so much more that we cannot see, came down to dwell with us, to be like us. Why would He do such a thing?

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Cor 2:9, Isaiah 64:4, NKJV)

Who could ever imagine the lengths God the Father would go to in order to redeem his lost and rebellious creation. To send his only Son to not only dwell with man as a man, but to even die a most horrific death on our behalf. The Father had to watch his son be mocked, beaten and then impaled to a cross. So grim was it that at some point His Son to cried out "My God my God why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46, Ps 22:1)

Jesus' followers were absolutely devastated. No man ever spoke like this man; no man ever did the things he did. They got to spend three years with this amazing teacher, and believed he would redeem Israel. He had warned them what he was about to do, but they could not comprehend it. And now they were in fear and hiding.

But then imagine the unspeakable joy of those same disciples once they fully realized that it truly was their risen teacher standing there before them, now revealed as Lord and Savior!

But it doesn't end there. God did not just redeem us, He wants a close, personal relationship with us. The Bible describes the type of relationship He wants with us in at least three ways, all revealing a wonderful aspect of His love for us.

Friend: Before Christ's arrival, scripture hinted at this when it told us "there is a friend who sticks

closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24). But then Jesus himself told his disciples (and us) plainly;

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15, NIV).

What a wonder, for God to call us his friend!

Adopted son/daughter:

"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' ... fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:15, 17. See also Eph. 1).

This is one of my favorite concepts in scripture, that God, the creator of the universe has adopted me as his son and I can call him Daddy! (Abba). He wants that intimate of a relationship with us, like a child has with his daddy!

Bride: In that passage so popular for weddings, all believers together are described as the church, as Jesus' bride (Eph. 5:25-27). This one may be harder for males to grasp, but no less powerful. Jesus is in the process of building us up as his radiant possession.

Years of trials, of missed opportunities or other failures can sap the joy of His salvation from our life. Some of you may feel like David who prayed "Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." (Psalm 51:12 NIV) I go through such periods myself. But when we do, we can use His Word to remind us of how great His love is for us, and that we are at the same time His (Jesus) friend, His (God the father) child and His (Jesus) bride, He will restore the joy that comes with His salvation. Let Him wrap His arms afresh around you as your friend that sticks closer than a brother, in the strong embrace of your loving father, and in the embrace of your beloved.

Reference:

1. <http://www.arky.org/newsltr/arknl2104.pdf>

**THE JOY OF THE LORD IS
YOUR STRENGTH (NEH. 8:10)**