

## Breaking the Mirror or Enhancing the Image?

Recently during Communion on Sunday, December 05, 2004 I began to think about what it is that I do to God when I sin against Him. From a child I've been taught that the sins of mankind cause man to die, both physically and spiritually. **Until now, however, I have never seriously thought about what it is that my sin actually does to God.**

The basis for this discussion must be founded in the belief and understanding that God is the Creator, and we are His creation, and that He is the Potter and we are the clay. We did not create ourselves, but are in fact created by God in His image according to Genesis 1:26-27. Any other belief in our origins makes this discussion moot. Likewise, a thorough understanding of Psalms 139:13-16 brings us to the point of comprehension that each one of us is fearfully and wonderfully made, and that God knew us individually while we were being formed in our mother's womb.

**What is so special about man that God even cares, or that He loves us?** Psalms 8:3-6 addresses these questions. With over 6 billion people currently in the world today, what difference or impact does any single person make to God in all of eternity?

I believe the answer to the secret of our worth lies in the declaration, by God, that we are created in His Image, but what does that mean? Since Adam and Eve sinned and all of mankind born after them have sinned, what does our sins do to God? **What really happens to God when we sin?**

When I first began to ask these questions in earnest, my thoughts were directed toward the traditional Christian response. A response that acknowledges that our sin separates us from God and since God is Holy, He could not allow us as unholy beings to live an eternal life with Him, or to be in His presence. Somehow we must be punished for our sins, or be forgiven them. We needed a Savior, but who could qualify?

God tells us in His Word in Hebrews 9:12 that without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission or pardon of sins. This of course is the basis for the Old Testament sacrifices where believers looked forward to receiving atonement and forgiveness for their sins. This in turn led to Jesus taking on the form of a sinless man to become our atonement and Savior by the shedding of His blood for our sins as we place our faith in His finished work on the Cross. The suffering of Jesus certainly was physical, but it involved so much more. It really is a mind-boggling wonderful mystery.

Most of us believers think we know the story well, but do we? **I seemed to be drawn to the question, what does my sin do to God?** It started to almost haunt me. I felt like I was on the edge of a new revelation. I understand that my sin removes me from God's presence and that it breaks my fellowship with Him, but this is still all about me. **What about God and what do my sins do to Him?**

The answer must be related to our worth to God, each one of us. With so many of us in the world today numbering into the billions, what difference is it to God when any one of us sins? Surely it must be relevant to our being created in the Image of God. Man is the only portion of God's creation that was created in His Image. The angels weren't and the animals weren't. Only mankind was. What does that mean? I believe it means more than what most of us with a finite mind will ever understand, including myself.

While reflecting upon these things, I began to comprehend and realize at least one thing my sin does to God. There are probably more, but this one thing seemed to be paramount to me. **My sin destroys God's ability and opportunity to see His Image and Likeness that He put into me.**

Sin caused man to become unholy. After that, God couldn't look upon man and see His Image in that condition. After man sinned and before God provided atonement for that sin, God was eternally cut off from His Image and from His Glory that He put into each one of us, and He was cut off without hope! **The mirror of His Image had been broken and man could not restore it.**

**Therefore, my sin breaks the mirror of God's Image within me and causes Him eternal anguish and devastation! Why does it do that? It does that because my sin destroys the opportunity for God to see His Image and His Glory that is created within me. I have broken and destroyed the mirror and it is smashed beyond recognition!**

Our sins caused God so much anguish and heartache, potentially for all of eternity, that He had to personally pay the price and provide Himself as the atonement. This was needed for our cleansing so His Image within us could be made whole again and could be seen again by Him. It is accomplished through our faith in His redemptive work of Jesus on the Cross. Only a Holy God could provide atonement.

Therefore, we celebrate Christmas, because God gave Himself to us as His Holy Son, Jesus, born as a baby, to become a man without sin in order to be our Savior. We then celebrate Easter because God provided the atonement for our sin, thereby restoring His Image within us, by our faith in that finished work. So after Jesus' Death and Resurrection, we are able to participate in God's work of restoring His Image and Glory within us, by our faith and obedience. **The mystery of God's Image and Atonement is accepted by faith.**

After having come into faith what happens when I sin again? Even though Jesus died for my sins once for all, do I still break God's Image within me? I believe the answer is yes!

In many places in the Bible we are told how we have the opportunity to be a delight and a pleasure to God. **What an awesome thought that we, as human beings with finite minds, have the ability to delight and bring pleasure to an infinite and Holy God.** Likewise, as the law of physics teaches us, for every action there is a reaction, and we also have the opportunity to be a non-delight and a non-pleasure to God. Even after faith is declared, my sinful attitudes, thoughts and actions continue to break God's Image within me, causing Him much anguish and torment. After Jesus and faith, however, the anguish is no longer for eternity and not without hope for either God or myself.

**My conclusion therefore is, before the Cross, and before coming to faith, my sins broke God's Image and Glory within me for all of eternity, inhibiting and preventing Him from seeing it.** After the Cross, because of Faith, my sins continue to break His Image and Glory within me, but not for eternity. Now His Image and Glory are broken within me either until I physically die, or until I become restored again through repentance and confession of those sins. **Thank God for I John 1:9 where it says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** **What a Wonderful and Blessed Hope!**

The importance of these thoughts and questions about what my sins and choices do to God is very sobering. These thoughts are a constant reminder indeed of the impact that I can have on God. I don't know if my Theology is totally correct about what my sin does to God, but approaching it from this perspective certainly keeps me focused on being aware of temptation. I find this to be very helpful in overcoming temptation when it arises, and for that I am grateful. All of a sudden I have a new comprehension of how I have an important role to play in allowing and enabling God to see His Image and His Glory enhanced within me, as part of His creation. **I have a choice. By my attitudes, thoughts and actions, I can choose to either enhance God's Image or to break the mirror within me!**

We have the power to bring God immense delight and pleasure, or we have the power to bring Him immense anguish and suffering by either enhancing or separating Him from seeing His Image and Glory that is within each one of us. I am excited about these Image concepts and joyfully share them with you this Christmas. Depending upon my attitude, thoughts and actions, I now often ask myself the question, **"What are you doing Bill, are you Breaking the Mirror, or Enhancing the Image"?** Asking myself this question helps to temper my response and is helping me in my walk with the Lord. May we all enhance God's Image and rejoice in His Love, Grace and Mercy this Christmas Season and in the year ahead.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year in God's Image.**

**From A Very Thankful Servant,**

William C. Fordham

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