

Is God An Old Meany?

Has it ever occurred to you that the image we hold of God in our hearts and minds determines just about every part of our faith? C.S. Lewis grew up believing that God was an "Old meany looking around to see if someone is having a good time, to put a stop to it." If that's true, then where would God be at a football game, when we are on a family vacation, or wherever with the grandkids laughing and playing? How would you pray to an old meany looking around to see if someone is having a good time? You probably wouldn't except in times of severe crisis such as life and death, surgery or earthquakes.

Anyone who spends much time around religious people will encounter those who view God as a vengeful, spiteful, capricious being...a picture that is as far removed from the God of the New Testament as night is from day. If we have seen Christ through the Gospels, we know who God is. He is neither an angry vengeful ogre eager to punish, nor a pliable, insecure smiley-faced waiter eager to please. The overwhelming image that Jesus gives us of God is that of compassion. In Mark 6:30-34, Jesus had been ministering to the crowds and needed a break, so He took His disciples away for some quiet time. But the crowds found Him...by the thousands. When Jesus saw them coming, Mark tells us "He was moved with compassion on them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd...."

To be a sheep without a shepherd is to be a person who believes that he will not suffer the consequences of sin: cheat a little here, lie a little there, flirt over here even though we're married, or experiment with drugs over there. God sees the broken families, the broken bodies, the marriages broken apart. God sees, God hurts, God has compassion for we are "sheep without a shepherd."

We remember Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and they know me." Out of God's heart of compassion, He gives the One who knows each of us by name. He is willing to die for His sheep and is willing to leave the ninety-nine back at the fold and go look for us because we are lost, hanging over a cliff. This is the Good News for today. God

not only sent us a Shepherd, but became a lamb Himself slain for the sins of the world. Now that's a God I can believe in and give my life to.

Has our mistaken image of God kept us from opening our heart to Him? Is the God we worship One who is waiting to see if we are having fun and then stops it? Or is He the God of the Scriptures...not an ogre...not a pushover but a Father who waits for His prodigal son to return ... a Shepherd who has compassion on each of us for we are as ``sheep without a shepherd."

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