

Have you ever noticed how Father God's ways are so often diametrically opposed to the ways of men? We see this several times in the Scriptures:

1. "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve." (Jesus)
2. If you would be first, be last.
3. If you wish to save your life, lose it.
4. Strength is made perfect in weakness.
5. To be exalted, humble yourself.
6. To be rich, give away all you own....
7. If you want to attain eternal life, stop striving to gain it.  
Instead, accept it as a present (Wow!)

A couple of weeks ago I was privileged to sit under the teaching of Rev Ed Piorek who has written a book (I think, in fact, he has written several) called *The Father Loves You*. I want to share some of what he said mixed with some further musings of mine.

In Matthew 3:13-17 we read of the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry. It serves as a powerful, indeed a potentially life-changing lesson on God's heart, both as evidenced by Christ's actions, and by His Father's and the Spirit's response to Him.

Jesus, Son of God, Only One completely equal to God, one with the Father, Perfect Sinless Son, who as Man NEVER ONCE sinned against His Father. Jesus, this Jesus goes to John the Baptist, asking John to baptize Him.

In John's day, his teachings on repentance were for the purpose of prodding people to deal with their carnal rebellion against God, to prepare them for the soon coming of the Messiah. So when a person come to John to be baptized, he was admitting in a very public way that he was turning from his sinful ways and coming back, if you will, "into the boat", into the heart of God, coming into agreement with God's will and God's desires.

So when Jesus approached John, John was aghast and said that he himself should be baptized by Jesus. Jesus replied that He wanted to "fulfill all righteousness."

Can you picture that event? Think of how this appeared at that moment before He went down under the water. Think of how those watching presumed about Jesus. He, the Exalted One, He who made the universe, who flung the stars into space, let John plunge Him down, down in an action of utter self-effacement. He was

buried, as it were, in that water, held down as the waters of the Jordan closed over Him. And then He came up.



Three things happened immediately after this action which was a perfect mirror of the humility and love for the Father that Jesus had.

- 1) The heavens were opened. (3:16) When the heavens open in Scriptures, God does an awesome thing. To have the heavens open over a person is like being positioned under God directly, with Him downloading directly into a person a message or a blessing. This happened because Jesus humbled Himself that day.
- 2) The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove, (3:16b) and alit upon Him. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, undoubtedly for His ministry.

that lay immediately before Him. Others witnessed God's anointing upon Him - -  
- and this followed because He humbled Himself that day.

3) God spoke out loud to Him that day. In Luke's description of this, He quotes Father God as saying, "You are my beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

What does that mean? First of all, imagine Jesus' own heart when He heard what His Dad said. Imagine the swelling of gratitude and love that arose within Him as He heard this unbelievably sweet sentence. Let's put it in Robin's Indiana paraphrase, okay? "Son, you are my very favorite! Oh how I love you, Son. I'm so proud of you, so very pleased and thrilled with your heart and your humility."

Wow! How about you? Don't you long to experience an open heaven between you and God? Would you not be encouraged by a new anointing for His purposes in your life? Wouldn't you be thrilled to hear Him tell you how happy and pleased He is with you?

Then do what Jesus did. Go to your Father. Humble yourself before Him. Stay there and let Him come to you. You will never outwait your Beloved Father. Never. He is longing to caress you and encourage you and pour out His Spirit upon you; indeed to raise you to heights you have never known before.

And the way up is down.

*5 Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.  
6 He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what.  
7 Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human!  
8 Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death - and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion.  
9 Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything...*

*Phillipians 2: 5-9 (the Message).*

