



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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An Unforgettable Name

David Clayton



GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are many different sides to the gospel, but the most important facet of it focuses on the issue of the kind of person that God is. There is no knowledge that can be compared with this, and it is the true knowledge that men need. It is the key to all the dreams, desires and hopes that we have had as Christians.

Recently I received a kind message from a dear sister who is concerned about the name used when we are addressing or speaking about God. She was concerned that we ignore His name, and that we do not pronounce it correctly. This name, some would say is Jehovah, while others say it is Yahweh, or some other variation of these words.

There is a popular song entitled 'El Shaddai,' and some of the words are, 'El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El-Elyon or

Adonai.' These words are referring to the titles of God as they are expressed in Hebrew. For example, in Genesis 1:1 it says:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

The word 'God' here is from the word 'Elohim.' So, in the very first verse of the Bible, there is a word which is used to mean 'Mighty God.' We who have been preaching the truth about God have pointed out that 'Elohim' does not refer to three gods, or three in one, which is what trinitarians suggest.

We know that the word 'Elohim,' which means, God, is pluralized to demonstrate that God is mighty and great. This word alone proves that if somebody says you cannot use any other word to refer to God, they are wrong. The very first verse in the Bible contradicts that, because here He is referred to as Mighty God.

In Genesis 17:1, you can find another name of God. It says,

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. (Genesis 17:1)

The phrase here is 'El Shaddai' and it means 'the Almighty God.' Jehovah appeared to Abraham saying, "I am El Shaddai," so, this is another name that He claims as His own and asks Abraham to remember it. If God says, 'I am El Shaddai,' you would not be out of place if you referred to Him as such.

In Genesis 18:3, when Jesus and the

two angels came down to Abraham. It says:

And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: (Genesis 18:3)

The word used here for Lord is 'Adonai,' defined by The Strong's Concordance as a word that is used to refer to the Lord/God. By the time you reach the 18th chapter of the Bible you already have three titles that God uses to refer to Himself. 'Elohim,' 'El Shaddai' and 'Adonai.' In Genesis 14:18, it says:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God. (Genesis 14:18)

Here you find another title for God. The phrase here is 'El Elyon' meaning 'The Most High God.' 'Elohim,' The Mighty God, 'El Shaddai,' God Almighty, 'El Elyon,' The Most High God, 'Adonai,' Lord. All of these are phrases that are used in the very first book of the Old Testament to refer to God. When you go a little further, in Exodus 6:3, God says something a little strange. He says:

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, (by my name El Shaddai), but by my

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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name Jehovah was I not known to them. (Exodus 6:3)

It is interesting, because when you go back to Genesis and other places, you see where the word Jehovah is used. But it seems like even though the word was used by the person who was writing the book, at the time when these men were alive, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they did not actually know God by that name. They knew him by the name, El Shaddai, God Almighty. But God says they did not know my name Jehovah.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

What we are familiar with is the idea that a name in the Bible signifies the character or characteristics of a person. When I was a little boy, I was hyperactive and troublesome and so my mother used to refer to me as "Jim Breeze," this was when I was about 3 or 4 years old. After a while they started calling me 'Jimmy', and in my first recollection of myself, this was my name. One day a lady came to the home and as usual, I was giving my mother trouble and provoking my siblings. The lady said, "you should call him by his right name,

call him David and then maybe he will stop being so troublesome." I do not know if that had anything to do with it but afterwards, everybody made an effort to call me by my name, David, and the word Jimmy disappeared.

I say this to illustrate my point that a name is often fixed to someone because of their characteristics. In Jamaica, especially in high school, everybody gets a nickname. If you do not get one, you are not a normal child. When I was going to school, I liked to boast that I had three different bloods in me: my father was Negro, my grandfather was Chinese, and my grandmother was Indian. Of course, I was promptly labelled 'bloods' during high school. The name was based on my characteristics.

Each of these names of God is a name that describes His characteristics. The Mighty God - Elohim. The Self-Existent One - Yahweh. All of these are legitimate titles of God, but what is noteworthy is that every one of them is based upon His greatness and might. These titles bring out respect, fear, awe. You think of God as the King and what comes to mind? Every time you hear people talk about the king of a certain country, they are focusing on greatness, honour and being exalted above everyone else. This is true even for someone like the queen of England, a frail and feeble old lady. But by virtue of the fact that she is called Queen, everyone reveres her. The magazines and the press jump on every word she says. Every time she appears in a photo, it is all over the news media. When you think of a king or Queen, this is what you think of. When someone like this speaks, you obey and submit, you do not defy or resist the person's will.

PERCEPTIONS OF GOD

My first perception of God, even from my childhood, was kind of like Santa Claus, a person who is able to give you good things, but is watching you to see whether or not you behave properly before rewarding you. The idea I had of God for most of my life was that He is a bit frightening and unpredictable; you do not want to encounter him at a

time when you are not fully prepared. You are always a little tentative because he is watching and judging you.

The Bible encourages this idea. Exodus 3:4-5 says:

And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. (Exod 3:4-5)

This is kind of frightening because this person is so holy that even your shoes offend Him! These are the stories that are fed to you in Sabbath school and in your earliest awareness of God - He is a fearsome person! I kind of understand the perception put forth by some people that if you are coming into His presence and you are a lady, you need to cover your head. There are whole doctrines that are based upon this. There are people who believe that a female cannot be saved if she comes to pray with her head uncovered. Here is a biblical passage that supports this kind of idea; you come into the presence of God so take your shoes off because they are offensive to Him. This is a little intimidating.

Habakkuk 1:13 says:

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he? (Hab 1:13)

This is the Bible. This is the book that we say determines what we believe and how we behave. Here it says of God, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." Job says it even more strikingly. He says in Job 15:15,16:

Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water? (Job 15:15-16)

Do you qualify? Are you among those who drink iniquity like water? Well, if you are honest you will have to concede that there are many times when you do not qualify to stand in the presence of God, based on statements like this. God has no confidence in His saints, much more the people who drink iniquity like water and yet He is of purer eyes than to behold evil. To make matters worse, Proverbs 15:3 says:

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. (Prov 15:3)

It is like the song ‘Santa Claus is coming to town’ that says, ‘he knows when you’re sleeping, he knows when you’re awake, he knows if you’ve been good or bad so be good for goodness’ sake! He’s making a list, checking it twice, finding out who’s been naughty or nice. Santa Claus is coming to town.’ A silly little song it is, but when you look at the lyrics it kind of reflects the perspectives we have of God.

Hebrews 4:13, which is in the New Testament, says:

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb 4:13)

I remember a sister was in our meeting one night and she said that, in her earlier days, she had thoughts in her mind of killing people. It took a lot of courage to admit that, but it was kind of reassuring to me because although I never had similar plans of murder, sometimes certain types of thoughts passed through my mind which I would never tell anyone.

The reason for this is that I do not want you to know what is hidden inside of my heart when God is not in control. In my heart, without Him there is nothing good. I am aware of this fact daily, and this is good for me because it makes me depend on Him. I know what I am capable of without Him. I am capable of things that would shock other people. So, the verse says, everything is “naked and opened unto the eyes” of the One

we are dealing with. He knows my thoughts, He knows what is inside, He knows what I am capable of. When we consider it, it can be very frightening. He is a universal watcher, and He is always making sure that He has His eye on you. As a matter of fact, it seems that he is like a great probation officer.

In Luke 13:7-9, Jesus told the story of a man who had a fig tree which was bearing nothing:

Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. (Luke 13:7-9)



What is this story teaching? It seems that God is saying, “ok all this time you have been wasting space. I am ready to wipe you out, but I am going to give you a little more time. And if you begin to produce fruit, good. But if not, then you are going to be cut off.” This seems to be the point of the story.

There are Christians who feed on these things and preach them zealously and convincingly. I grew up hearing sermons like these, and feeling the weight of a watching, judging God resting on my shoulders. There is a particular sermon I remember where they talked about how Uzzah touched the ark and was smitten dead. They emphasized how God is not to be trifled with, because if you play with Him, you are liable to suffer the consequences.

That was hard for me, because I was someone who liked to play and tease people. So, to be told that God does not play around, was very difficult to hear. Maybe that is part of the reason why, when I could, I got away from religion and from God. I believed that He was not about to tolerate my foolishness. He was not only a probation officer, waiting to see if you will bring forth fruit but He is also Judge and executioner. In Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 it says:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. (Eccl 12:13-14)

God is Judge, and is going to consider every single thing you ever did. He is also going to look at your thoughts “every secret thing” when He brings you into judgment.

Jeremiah 7:20 says,

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched. (Jer 7:20)

We can come to the Bible legitimately, and can end up being very frightened of God. This is why I think it is most important that we address this issue, come to the right conclusion and are able to share it with other people.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF JESUS

When we go to the teachings of Jesus, it is clear to see that He is trying to move the world from the old covenant to the new. On one hand He is telling the people that they are still to respect the law. *One jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law till all be fulfilled.* On the other hand, He is trying to say to His people, we are in the process of moving to a different phase, a different system, a different understanding.

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A Tale of Two Rats



I am going to tell a story. I almost entitled this message, 'A Tale of Two Rats.' One of the peculiarities about my home is my wife's abhorrence for all kinds of rodents and insects. My house has to be sealed with mesh over the windows and there has to be a screen door because nothing must come in. I always say if there was a fire we would have a hard time getting out before something happens, but anyway, I want my wife to be happy, so I cooperate.

There must be no mosquitos, no bugs, and especially, no lizards. If a lizard gets into the house, it is a major crisis. Nobody will sleep until I find that lizard. No matter what I am doing, I have to leave it and go hunt for the lizard and catch it and get rid of it. Usually I catch it and I will throw it over into the bushes because it is a lizard.

But rats are especially abhorrent. They are not permitted, and the house is sealed against them. Rats are especially hateful because, in Jamaica, some rats carry a disease called leptospirosis. They walk around and urinate on things and if you touch it, and you happen to contract the disease, leptospirosis can kill you.

One day, not long ago, my wife came and showed me that something had eaten through the aluminum foil covering

some baked potatoes we had on the stove. She was curious to know what could have done this. I looked at it and the only thing I could think of was, a rat had to have done this! But there was no way - it was impossible because a rat cannot get into the house, it is like 'Fort Knox' against all rodents. So the possibility of a rat being in the house was a major crisis which we could not accept.

A couple of days later, my wife came to me with a horrified look on her face, declaring 'I just saw a huge rat in the kitchen!' So, I rushed to the kitchen with my machete in hand and searched thoroughly, but there was no sign of the culprit. We sealed the door so that nothing could get out but now there was a major issue. My wife could not go into the kitchen to work because of the uninvited guest now lurking in the shadows. This meant I would not be getting any dinner, and nothing else could happen in that kitchen until we got this rat.

We got some glue traps and placed them strategically, and a little later we came back and found one of them filled with rat hair. Apparently, the rat had gotten stuck to the trap, but escaped. This meant that it was one of those strong types of rats because the glue trap was a big one, yet it still managed to escape. No matter how we searched, we could not find this creature. So next we put some roasted coconut on the trap since rats love this treat.

In a short while we heard a frenetic struggle, and when I rushed to look, there was the scoundrel firmly caught. So, I took him outside with the machete and I put him down on the ground, knowing full well I would have to execute his sentence. I looked at the rat and I knew his crime. His crime was that he was a rat. His second crime was that he came into my kitchen and endangered the serenity of my family.

And for this he had to die.

My wife, who is generally very meek and gentle, surprised me by suggesting we should spray some insecticide into its eyes. That suggestion surprised me, because I did not expect her to say that. But I understood that she was just upset at this rat for getting into her kitchen and endangering the serenity of our family. I reasoned with her that even though it had to die because of the threat it posed to us, there was no need for us to also impose suffering upon it. What did he do to deserve to suffer? He was just being a rat. And so I hit him with the machete in his neck, killed him quickly and got rid of him.

Now, there are several things I learned from this rat. The first thing that came to my mind was the fact that the rat had done nothing wrong in terms of rat nature. If the rat carries leptospirosis, whose fault is that? Is this something it does deliberately? If it has the nature to eat up my food, is this something that it deliberately does to annoy me? And yet, when we catch the rat, we are so upset at being disadvantaged, and angry at the danger that it brings to us, that sometimes we want to hurt it more.

Reason dictates that the rat has to die but you do not have to make it suffer. You want to get rid of the danger but why is it necessary to inflict pain in the process? This whole incident reminded me of something. If you look at romans 7:18-19 it says:

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (Rom 7:18-19)

If you look at Romans 5:19 it explains why human beings are this way. It says:

. . . . By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, . . . (Rom 5:19)

(It wasn't the rat's fault that he was a rat. And it wasn't my fault that I was born a sinner).

Romans 7:20 says:

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Rom 7:20)

You cannot blame somebody for being himself. You cannot blame a rat for being a rat, but still, even though the rat is just being a rat, what has to happen to the it? The rat must die, because in spite of the fact that it cannot help itself, it carries something which is deadly, leptospirosis. The rat gets into a place where he endangers my family; he is going to urinate on my dishes and eat up my food, so I have to get rid of him for the greater good. I do not hate the rat but I know I have to get rid of it.

ANOTHER RAT

Now let me tell you another story about another rat. One day I was sitting in my living room with my daughter. Suddenly she exclaimed, "Daddy! There's a rat in the yard!" I grabbed my machete, my tool of choice, and rushed outside. Anywhere in my surroundings I see a rat, I usually get rid of it. But when I ran out and raised my machete to strike, the little rat started walking towards me! That had never happened to me with any rat in my life. So, there was a moment of shock and surprise and I let down my machete.

This little rat crawled right up to my feet and sat down! My desire to strike changed, and I said to myself, this poor creature must be sick! Something is definitely wrong with it. My grandson came out and he said, "Grandpa, he looks hungry, let me feed him." I said, "no Cayde, you cannot feed a rat, we do not want to encourage such a creature around here." But he insisted that he wanted to feed it. So I let him get a biscuit, which he gave to the little mouse who immediately tucked into it. It sat up on its hind legs and finished the entire biscuit, quite unafraid or unconcerned!

I poked him with a stick, but he would not run. We started to walk away and

the mouse started following after us. All of a sudden, everything changed about this mouse. I still had my machete in hand, but now I was looking to see if any cats were passing. The first thought I had before was that I would throw it to a cat, but now I was looking to see if there were any cats that I needed to protect the mouse from! Suddenly I had changed from the destroyer of this mouse to its protector!

I was kind of surprised at myself. Why was I doing this? This mouse was still possibly carrying leptospirosis. If it got into the house it would probably eat up my food and cause general destruction, and yet here I was thinking differently, and wanting to protect this creature. What was the reason? The reason was that ***it had shown complete trust in me.*** It would not run from me, and was not afraid of me. He was putting his confidence in me, and because of this, my whole attitude towards him changed. Before I had been ready to destroy, but now I was ready to protect.

I never thought that I could learn spiritual lessons from rats, but I did. I understood more clearly why the only thing God asks of us is that we trust Him. When we are afraid of Him and are doing all our damage, the only thing that He can do is to one day say, with tears in His eyes, "I have to remove you, you are a danger to my universe. I cannot allow you to live in a place that is good."

But if you are a little mouse, and you come and follow Him around and you say, "I know you cannot harm me, I know you will feed me and you will do me well, I want to be with you." In amazement God says, "I will protect you from anybody who tries to hurt you. And more than this, will even take you into my home!" Because to be honest, I thought of doing that with the rat. I thought of making him a pet in my house. If it wasn't for the fact that it might be a carrier of disease, I thought, this rat is so friendly it would be nice to feed him and keep him and see what happens.

But I did not want to take the chance

because it might have disease. So what I eventually did was, I took it and put it over the wall in an open lot. I could not kill that mouse, and I hoped that a cat or hawk would not get it, but I could not kill it. I remember that little creature because that was the only rat in my life that ever trusted me like that. Therefore it is the only rat that I came across that I never killed.

It helped me to understand why God can never hurt anybody who trusts Him, and why He only asks one thing. He says, have faith, and trust in me! And if you trust in God, and realize that He means you no harm, if you understand that He wants you only for yourself and loves you just because of you, if you understand this, you can guarantee that God will always protect you and have His arms around you.

Furthermore, He will cure you of the 'leptospirosis' so you can be fit to live with Him in His home. That is the lesson I learned from those two rats, and I thank God that I can think of Him in this way, and that He is my friend. When we go to God, we do not go because we have to, or because we are threatened, or fear His wrath if we do not. But we go because we want to, because we like to be with Him. He doesn't threaten me and say, 'if you do not come, this is what is going to happen.' I am there because I want to be.

When you do things from obligation, it is not the best way. As a boy when I went to school, I went because my parents sent me. For maybe ten years in primary school and high school, I went because I was told to go, not because I enjoyed it. There were moments which were ok, but I never liked having to get up and travel all those miles, and then sometimes upon arriving, the teacher would give you a beating or some other punishment.

When I became a man I chose to go to college of my own free will. This time I enjoyed it, and all the experiences I had while being there. I think I did well because I was doing something that I wanted to do. It is like that with God.

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An Unforgettable Name

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He is trying to say both things, and so sometimes you find that some of his statements seem to be difficult to understand. But here is one that is not so difficult. In John 17:6 Jesus says:

“I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word.”

He is talking to God. He is talking to El Shaddai, El Elyon, Elohim, Yahweh etc. and He refers to Him as Father. He says ‘now oh Father.’ It is almost like a new name.

So here are the twelve disciples and maybe a few other followers and Jesus says, ‘I have manifested your name.’ It is interesting that He does not say, ‘I have told your name,’ I have expressed your name, He says I have *manifested* your name. What he means is, I have revealed, I have made it known. I have exposed it.

If you go to the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you will never find one single verse in which Jesus gives us a name by which we should refer to God (other than the name, Father). Not even one verse! You will never find a verse in which He says, “my Father’s name is El Shaddai, Elohim, Yahweh,” or any other name. Yet, here he says, “I have *manifested* your name.”

What we understand him to be saying is, “I have made the *character* of my Father known,” because a name in the Bible, as I pointed out earlier, is primarily focused on an expression of a person’s character. In other words, Jesus says, “I have given an understanding of your character to these men that you have given Me out of the world.

So, when we come to the New Testament and are looking for the name of God, what we are looking for is, the

kind of character which was revealed concerning God! Not what sound was used to address Him, not the title that was expressed, but the character that was revealed. This is *most* important when we are considering the question of what is the name of God.

John 1:18 says:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (John 1:18)

Notice the opposing ideas here. Nobody has seen God, but what did Jesus do? Jesus declared Him! In other words, Jesus made us see God. He made Him known in such a way that we have actually seen God. So, you understand that there is a kind of conflict here between the physical things that people look for, and what Jesus actually came to reveal. This is what it means in 2 Corinthians 4:6 where it says, “*we see the glory of God expressed in the face of Jesus Christ.*”

So, we have seen God, because Jesus says, ‘if you have seen Me you have seen the Father.’ (John 14:9). That again is another striking statement which tells us that the important thing is not the sound that you make when you speak of God, but rather what you see when you look at God. Jesus says, “I have declared Him.” We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This is the *true* name of God.

THE TWO NAMES

In this context, there are two names that Jesus gave us concerning God. In the Old Testament, we pointed to five names, and there are more, but in the New Testament there are two names found in Jesus. I believe these are the two great names that we need to remember. The Jews stopped calling Him Yahovah because they said the name was too holy to pronounce. They had this tendency to fail to get the point.

When Moses made the serpent of brass, they never got the spiritual lesson. Instead, over four hundred years later, they were still worshipping this inanimate thing. They put it on a pole and were still burning incense to it hundreds of years later, because they missed the point. In the same way, they stopped referring to him as Yahovah and simply replaced the name with the title, “Lord,” trying to show him honor by pulling further and further away from him.

In Luke 11:2 we read:

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. (Luke 11:2)

In every school I ever attended in Jamaica, they always had a little devotion in the morning and one of the things they taught us as children was to say the Lord’s prayer. I did not learn that only in church, I also learnt it in school. We would say the Lord’s prayer at the end of devotion each morning when they had the general assembly. You had to learn it just as it is in the Bible. “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.” It became like a mantra. Something you recited and it never really meant anything personal.

Again, this demonstrates the human tendency to vocalize something without understanding it. Jesus was not in the habit of doing this. When He said you must say, “our Father which art in heaven,” what I believe we should do is to take that prayer, analyze it and see what the elements of it are, because this tells us how we should approach God. The main point is that Jesus said, when you talk to God, your perspective of Him should be that you are coming to your Father. He was not just saying, use the word. That would be nothing but a formal, legalistic interpretation of what he meant. What if I use the word “Daddy” instead, have I violated the Lord’s prayer? What if I miss out the part that says, ‘which art in heaven?’ Can you see the point? We should not focus on the secondary things which are not so important, but instead focus on the

meaning.

So Jesus said that God is our Father, and when we come to Him, this should be our perspective. It is kind of hard, because not everyone has a good father. I have heard that some of the stories I tell are a little difficult for some people to grasp because they had a bad father. But when Jesus said 'our Father,' He was talking about a good father, one who loves his children.

When the word 'father' is mentioned, three things come to mind. Firstly, respect - I respect my father. Secondly, I depend on my father. Thirdly, I obey my father. When my own father was around, I was never quite one hundred percent myself. Even though he was a very good father, he was also responsible for my training. I was never fully free to be myself when he was present. I was always trying to behave in a way that was pleasing to him.

Shortly after he died, I went to Germany and there was a song which a friend of mine played. The words kind of stuck in my mind. It says,

gonna wrap my arms around my daddy's neck and tell him that I missed him; tell him all about the man that I became and hope that it pleased him.

'Hope that it pleased him.' Even in this verse that talks about meeting my father again, there is a statement that says, 'I still want to meet your approval.' And I know it is true. I was always like that with my father. Whenever I heard him say, 'you have done well son,' it was very pleasing. I wanted his approval.

But there were words I would say and stories I would tell around my brothers that I would not say in my father's presence. So I was never quite one hundred percent free to be myself. In John 15:15 Jesus says:

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. (John 15:15)

So, Jesus goes a step further. He goes

from the idea that God is our Father to the reality that God is our **friend**. What makes a friend? He says the difference is that you now know my secrets and you know the truth about my heart. A friend is able to enter into the heart and mind, he knows you down on that intimate level. That is what makes you friends.

Whenever you are around a person just because you are *forced* to be there, you are inevitably under pressure. There is an element of discomfort. But when you have a true friend, you can stay or leave if you want to, and regardless of what you choose to do, the friendship remains and both parties can feel comfortable. We are easy with each other regardless. There are no demands, no pressure. I can be myself. So, Jesus gives us *two* names of God - **Father and friend**.

You never think of God in that way. God is King, He is Ruler, El Shaddai, El Elyon, Yehovah, Almighty... He is all these things. He is the kind of God that when you come near, you take off your shoes! He is awesome, He is great! He loves me... but... He is frightening! He is difficult to understand and it is best to be a little bit cautious around Him, even if He is my Father.

But when He comes as *friend*, this makes me much more comfortable with God. The thing about friendship is that the relationship is reciprocal. I want you, and you want me. Have you ever seen a one-sided friendship? Have you seen a man pursuing a woman or have you seen somebody trying to be friends with another person, and the person is trying to avoid him? Does that ever work? How does that feel? But in true friendship, it is two-sided. God is pursuing you and you are pursuing God. It makes a wonderful combination and yields marvelous results.

WHAT DOES GOD REALLY WANT?

But then I ask the question, what does God want of me? Ok, he wants me to glorify Him. Well, immediately that puts me under pressure; you want me because I can offer you something. You say, "I want you because you can pro-

mote my righteousness. I want you because you can teach people about the lifestyle I want them to live." OK, I am a useful tool, is that what I mean to you? Is that why you have interest in me? It doesn't satisfy me when I think like this. I ask myself the question, why does God bother with me?

There are some things that the Bible says which require that we consider carefully. For example, when the Bible talks about God roasting people forever. That is ridiculous and impossible, yet the Bible uses the phrases and we have to think about it and reason about it and find a way to explain it in keeping with the idea of the God of love. When the Bible reveals to me a God who seems to be hard and difficult to get along with, I have to reason about that. I am going to think about that and try to find the other places that balance this. Because that is not the only information we can find about God. We have to bring the information together in such a way that it gives us the true picture of Him.

So, I ask myself, why does God bother with me? Ok, You gave me Your commands and gave me Your salvation. You put Jesus on the cross and He died for me... I understand I am saved and I am here to glorify You. Now You can be done with me. You have saved me and given me the instructions, You have put me in your family, now you can be done with me. But God says, "no, no! I am not done, I want you. I desire fellowship with you.

That is what blows my mind! He could have said, "I gave you everything you need, now I have got other business to attend to." But instead, He says, "that is not what I was really after. **What I want is you.**" And I ask, what for? Why bother with me? What can I do? Can I make you better? Can I make you greater? Can I enhance the name of Almighty God? Can I step into the universe and do something for God? I, a little flea? No, but He wants me still. Because He values my friendship. He wants me, for me!

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Escaping the Chains (part 5)

Howard Williams



THE FINAL MISSING ELEMENT

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1Jn 5:11) Believing is more than just a mental consideration, it is an actual experience that affects the life. “You don’t rule your belief, your belief rules you.” You don’t even have to state your belief. Your life tells of your belief in an undeniable way. If a man begins to visit a lady very often and is spending much time with her, he doesn’t have to say he loves her, it is evident by his constant visits. The same is true about the way we live. The words of Jesus are true, *“By their fruits ye shall know them.”* (Matt 7:21) Faith, trust, and belief are dealing with the same issue of knowing by experience that which is true.

WHAT IS OUR GREATEST NEED?

The word “greatest” implies the foremost, the top, or that which is at the pinnacle, so the greatest need is one that is above all the others existing in our lives. Since a need is directly related to a problem, if we want to correctly address our greatest need, must first know our greatest problem.

There is a verse in the Bible that tells us of our greatest need and implies our greatest problem all in the same breath. It is not a problem of money, it is not a problem of sickness and disease. This, our greatest problem, is far more fun-

damental and lies at the base of every other problem. It is one we inherited (*Rom 5:12*), built into the life we possess, passed on to us from our first parents, Adam and Eve. Here is the verse: *“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”* (*Luke 18:8*) According to this verse there is a lack of something on earth. The implication is that it may remain this way until the coming of the Son of God. This missing thing is faith. Lack of faith is unbelief. This is our greatest problem. Faith is our greatest need.

Simply put, unbelief is lack of trust. Let us first put that in perspective in our social relationships. What is your attitude to someone you don’t know – how do you know if you can believe them? What is your relationship to someone you don’t trust – do you willingly share information that you consider to be personal? In both cases you are very cautious and reserved because your ignorance and distrust inhibits your ability to be open and free. The point I am making is this: when trust is involved you are free, at liberty to be open.

Think of a young child who grows up in an atmosphere of love, trust and confidence. They will do daring things like jump from heights to a father they trust and know. In a similar way there is a relationship that exists with God. This relationship is built on the same level of Father and child, *except* we are dealing with a father who is FAR superior to any father we have known. His love is greater than any love we have ever felt but, because we don’t know him, we don’t experience even a fraction of that love. Since we don’t know him, we are ignorant of his character, ways, and love, causing us to live in a state of unbelief, preventing us from experiencing the blessings that come from him. Let me explain: Is it possible for

a child to have a loving relationship with his millionaire father and to suffer for lack of money? Or a father with power over sickness and disease, could his child die from an ailment? Absolutely impossible. Yet that is the exact problem today. We have such a father, but most of us are unaware or ignorant of the fact. Because of this ignorance, we can’t have a relationship of trusting Him with our entire life.

Don’t you sometimes wish there was such a person that you could let yourself go in his hand and never worry about anything? Don’t you wish childhood would have continued, where your parents took care of everything and you never worried? This is exactly what Christianity is about: having such a father that takes care of ALL our needs according to his limitless abilities. The truth of the matter is that we know a lot *about* God. Most times this information is what we hear from those who heard it from someone else, so the testimonies around us are often third and fourth hand, not first hand or personal. We do not truly know, in reality, the God of this universe. We do not know him personally even though we have had little glimpses from what we hear or read.

The amazing fact is that this God desires to know each person on a one-to-one basis. This is the privilege of New Testament Christianity. Here is a verse that shows how distinctly different is this Christianity: *“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a great than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”* (*Matt 11:11*) Have you ever thought about the mentioning of this kingdom of heaven before? This is a strange verse to many, but in light of Chapter 8, do you understand what it is saying? We could rephrase it something like this, “Even the most unim-

portant, weakest person in whom the Spirit of resurrected Jesus dwells is greater and has more than John the Baptist ever had.” Why? Because the closest he ever got was to put his hands on Jesus when baptising him. He died before the Kingdom of the indwelling Christ ever came and never had the chance to experience it.

FAITH – OUR GREATEST NEED

Faith, belief, trust, confidence and assurance are all wrapped up in this greatest of all needs. Can you imagine what would happen if we had an experience similar to that of the disciples after Pentecost? Can you imagine what example the world would see if you and I and all who are called by the name of Christ would begin to trust God with our all, having the faith, confidence and assurance that he would give us the experience of the kingdom here on earth today? The ONLY reason we don’t have that experience on earth today is because we don’t believe it. *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for*

he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb 11:6)

The unbelief of our generation has not been pleasing to God because the world is dying without it. The light of the gospel is needed to bring the testimony of God’s matchless love and fatherhood to a world groping in evil and darkness. What we need is an experience with God that will be a testimony to the world of a life that is superior in quality to what exists around us.

HOW TO ACQUIRE THIS FAITH

Faith is not achieved by working on faith. It is the result of a relationship. For you to trust someone you first need to KNOW the person. The way you know someone is by spending time with the person. The more time you spend talking and communicating, the more you will understand a person. Your appreciation grows from knowing to knowing better until finally trust develops. Honestly, do we spend time, I mean

quality time, with God? Do we acknowledge his presence with us at ALL times? Do we recognize the heavenly atmosphere of angels surrounding us constantly? The more we become familiar with these REALITIES the more our faith and trust in God will grow.

The word of God contains His messages and promises to us. They are God’s way of reaching and teaching us about himself and his desire for us. The more we become familiar with these words, the more our faith will grow because the words of God are the source of faith. (Rom 10:17) Pure faith is simply listening to God and knowing that what God says is true all the time. So if God says it, it is so, and we are convicted about the reality of what he says because we know he is our father and we experience it in our lives. This is our need, and this only will change our lives. Our faith must lay hold on his words to be materialized.



An Unforgettable Name

Continued from page 7

I always speak about my relationship with my children and grandchildren, because that is where I learn a lot too. When my grandson comes, what does he have to give me? He is more trouble than anything else because I have to keep my eyes on him. If he goes outside I have to ensure that he stays in the yard. He always wants me to make something for him or draw a picture for him, and he takes up my time.

He comes in, and while I am trying to work, he is talking. But I would not have it any other way. If he does not come to visit, I am concerned. Sometimes he is feeling a little uncomfortable, so he comes and sits in my lap. When he sits down, his little bones are poking me, and he is getting heavier, but I do not want him to move. I will suffer the inconvenience happily, because I *want* him to be there!

Why? There is no reason. We cannot discuss things on a mature level. When my son comes, he is older, we are on the same intellectual level, capable of talking about complex things. But when this little boy arrives, all he wants to talk about is, what one would consider foolishness. But I do not want it any other way. This helps me to understand why God wants me, because just like my grandson, I have nothing to give Him. I am a little annoyance, a little pest, I just get in the way and I just keep messing up. But He doesn’t care! He wants me for his friend!

I ask myself the question, am I thinking reasonably? Am I not trying to bring God down to a human level? But Let us reason a bit. Here is this God Almighty and He creates the universe. He has a mind that we cannot even begin to comprehend. We cannot imagine the greatness of this Person. What did He create us for? Is it so that he could

amuse himself looking at these little creatures running about the place?

What does this Almighty Being desire? What does a heart that is so great yearn for? The only thing I think He could ever want in this universe, is friendship. He wants a heart that can warm to his heart. Can you tell me of something that anybody could give to Him, the One who has everything and who created everything. What could *we* give to *Him*?

God made us independent so that when we turn to Him, we can experience true friendship. This is the only thing we can do to satisfy the heart of God. He knows we are not robots, we are free, and want Him. We can experience it, and so He can be happy in that knowledge.



The Incredible Jackfruit

Lenworth Frankson



Did you know that the jackfruit is the largest fruit in the world and is capable of reaching 120 pounds in weight? The other measurements are equally amazing. This fruit can measure up to 35 inches in length and 20 inches in diameter. A mature jack tree can produce some 200 fruits per year. The jackfruit is a multiple fruit composed of hundreds to thousands of individual flowers, and the fleshy petals of the unripe fruit are edible. The ripe fruit is sweet and tasty and the seeds when cooked have a starchy and nutty pleasant taste.

The tree is known as jack tree and just happens to be a species in the fig, mulberry, and breadfruit family. The jackfruit has a meat-like texture that lends itself to being called a "vegetable meat". It has a distinctive, musky smell, and a flavor that some describe as "juicy fruit gum" While it is sweet and fruity in flavor, it's appearance is quite unusual. It is covered in a spiky skin that is either green or yellow. You can eat the fruit on its own, add it to a soup or salad, and also enjoy it roasted or dry.

Not only is the jackfruit the largest fruit but it is low in carbs and has some of the best health benefits! This tasty superfood is rich in magnesium, vitamin C, vitamin B6, thiamin, riboflavin, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, iron, sodium, zinc and niacin among many other nutrients. Here are some of the health benefits of this interesting fruit.

1. MANAGE BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

People who are prone to high blood sugar levels need to be careful about what they eat. The good news is that jackfruit has a low glycemic index (GI), which simply means that it won't raise blood sugar levels significantly after it's eaten. The reason is that it's packed with fiber. The fiber content slows digestion and helps prevent blood sugar spikes. A diet that includes lots of low-GI foods and high in fiber has been shown to be helpful for promoting blood sugar control. In addition to its fiber content, jackfruit contains protein which has also been shown to help control blood sugar. One study found that adults who consumed jackfruit extract showed improved blood sugar levels and another study of diabetic mice found that jackfruit leaf extract helped reduce fasting blood sugar levels and provided long-term blood sugar control.

2. IMPROVES DIGESTION

Jackfruit contributes to improving the digestive system when eating it regularly due to its high content of fibers (3.6 g for every 100 g). It is not strenuous on the stomach even if eaten in large quantities and improves the bowel movement. It also protects the colon by removing carcinogenic chemicals out of the large intestine.

3. HELP TO FIGHT CANCER

Jackfruit has antioxidants and cancer-fighting phytonutrients. Research shows that the antioxidants found in jackfruit can neutralize free radicals, which helps fight some forms of cancer and can give the immune system the support it needs to continue fighting. Another study published in the Journal of Carcinogenesis in October 2012 found that the vitamin C in jackfruit can increase the activity of an important antioxidant enzyme that helps prevent breast cancer. Due to its richness with antioxidants and phytonutrient properties, plus the Vitamin

C, jackfruit can be helpful towards fighting other cancers like lung cancer, breast cancer, gastric cancer, skin cancer and prostate cancer. The fruit properties treat cell damage and develop resistance. The phytonutrients in jackfruit contribute to its anticancer, anti-hypertensive, antiulcer, and antiaging properties.

4. BODY BOOSTER

Fatigue, stress and muscle weakness can be treated by consuming jackfruit in one's daily diet seeing that it contains vitamins such as thiamine and niacin. A portion of 100 g of jackfruit pulp provides 4 mg of niacin. Niacin is a B vitamin that's made and used by your body to turn food into energy. It helps keep our nervous system, digestive system and skin healthy. Niacin (vitamin B-3) is often part of a daily multivitamin, but most people get enough niacin from the food they eat without supplements. It is also a great source of energy.

5. BLOOD PRESSURE REDUCER

With its high amount of potassium, jackfruit reduces and controls blood pressure which consequently lowers the chances of heart attacks, strokes, and cardio-disorder in general.

6. WEIGHT LOSS TYPE 2 DIABETES

Jackfruit can help in weight loss if consumed the right way. Jackfruit is high fibre, which helps improve our digestion and metabolism, the fundamentals of weight loss. It is not very high in calories, one cup of sliced jackfruit contains about 155 calories. Jackfruit is not exactly fit for keto, which is a very popular weight loss diet – as it is not very low in carbs – one cup of jackfruit contains about 40 g of carbs. However, it does have other benefits for weight loss that cannot be ignored. For example the fiber helps keep you satiated for longer, making you skip binging on junk unnecessarily. In fact, jackfruit is a low-calorie fruit that will help you

with your weight loss struggles.

Jackfruit is very fibrous – and that is extremely helpful for people with diabetes. Fibre slows down the rate at which sugar is released in the blood, therefore keeping your blood sugar controlled. Jackfruit is also rich in various vitamins and minerals like vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium, etc. When you are on a weight loss or diabetic diet, you tend to follow a very restrictive diet, that may lead to a deficiency of certain nutrients in the body, and the diet may, in fact, turn out to be unhealthy for you. Therefore, it is very important to include foods like jackfruit in your diet, which help maintain the balance by managing diabetes, as well as providing the body with the essential nutrients.

People with diabetes should include foods with low GI in their diet, as it means that they spike blood sugar less than foods that have a relatively higher GI. A study also found that people who consumed jackfruit had improved blood sugar levels.

7.FIGHTS WRINKLES

In order to avoid wrinkles on your skin, take a seed or two of jackfruit and grind it smoothly in cold milk for some time. Apply this paste on your face regularly to keep fine lines away. This is one of the chief benefits of jackfruit seeds and it should give your skin a boost of youth. Jackfruit seeds are also great for your skin's texture. Soak the seeds with some milk and honey and grind it into a fine paste. Apply this on your face evenly and let it dry completely. Wash off with lukewarm water and be amazed.

8.SEED PREVENTS ANAEMIA

Eating jackfruit seeds can give your daily nutrition an iron boost. Jackfruit seeds are a great source of iron which is a component of hemoglobin. A diet which is rich in iron eliminates the risk of anemia and other blood disorders. Iron also helps to support a healthy brain and a strong heart. These seeds are rich in thiamin and riboflavin which help in turning the food you eat into energy and keep your eyes, skin and

hair healthy. The seeds also provide small amounts of minerals like zinc, iron, calcium, copper, potassium and magnesium. Jackfruit seeds contain compounds that have an antimicrobial effect, which could help prevent contamination with bacteria that cause food borne illnesses. These seeds have also been used in traditional medicine to help with digestive tract problems, although more research is necessary to verify the potential benefits.

There is definitely much more to be discovered about jackfruit as researches are still being conducted for more results and discoveries of its unique and amazing properties that will provide more solutions for improving our health. Despite its nutritional values and enormous health benefits, the jackfruit is underutilized and not classified as a commercial crop and is rarely grown on regular plantation scale due to its short shelf life and insufficient processing facilities in the regions where they are grown. I hope in the near future this will change for this incredible fruit.



Two Rats

Continued from page 5

When you seek Him because you have to, there is pressure. He does not want that kind of relationship, but rather wants you to come because you know that He is warm, loving and welcoming. He is not demanding, but accepts you as a little broken rat.

He accepts you as a little nothing, He accepts you the way you are, and He says, I want you. Even though you might be a carrier of evil things, I want you because you trust me. I want you and I will help you to become everything that I ever want you to be, so that we can live together.



The Secret Life

Zdravko Vucinic

God has given us the opportunity to rejoice, to feel well in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, to feel accepted, and to be part of God's family on earth. It is a part of our life, an important part...

But our real life, which God sees, which Jesus sees, which the angels observe, and which the fallen angels observe, is our secret life - that life when you are alone. That secret life is what we really are. Our perseverance in faith, our growth in Christ, our spiritual progress, the survival of our fellowship and the progress of the gospel will also depend on that secret life.

WHAT IS THE SECRET LIFE?

Are you faithful and loyal to God; or are you just talking about it; is it just your mouth that "makes" you faithful and spiritual?

What do you think about when you are alone, in silence, when there is nobody. What do you think of others in that silence; how do you look at others around you...

Are you a hypocrite who "rolls his eyes" when you see something in others that you don't like...

Are you a faithful and loyal brother or sister...

How do you treat family members when no one is watching...

What does your wife or husband think of you, realistically... Are you an example to them...

In general, what are your thoughts, motives, intentions...

Is there something in your life that you would not like others to know about it...

Some years ago, God drew my attention to the fact that this secret life is what is the subject of a great controversy, that this secret life is what

Heaven sees, that the outward life also depends on that secret life... from that time, I took it very seriously.

By a willing decision to turn from yourself to Jesus, to renounce everything for the sake of Jesus, to remove yourself from the center of life for the sake of Jesus, to make everything you do for His interest as well as for other people, to subordinate your interests to Jesus, and to keep it persistent..., your secret life will be cleansed, arranged, for example, to the glory of God... What freedom in Christ, brothers and sisters. Then come the real blessings... Then come the fruits... Then your outward life will be organized...

We cannot overemphasize the importance and significance of this surrender in secrecy, and the freedom that results from it. Then you feel like a little water in the palm of God, you feel safe, protected, you know that everything is under His control... You know that whatever happens that His hand has

organized or allowed everything, because you are committed to Him, you have experienced freedom from yourself because of Him and it gives you an experience of peace and security...

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. (Ps 91:1-2)



WALK AROUND YOURSELF

When you're criticizing others,
And are finding here and there
A fault or two to speak of,
Or a weakness you can tear;
When you're blaming
someone's meanness
Or accusing some of self,
It's time that you went out
To take a walk around yourself.

There's a lot of human failures
In the average of us all,
And lots of grave shortcoming
In the short ones and the tall;
But when we think of evils
Men should lay upon the shelves
It's time that we all went out
To take a walk around ourselves.

We need so oft in this life
This balancing set of scales
Thus seeing how much in us wins
And how much in us fails;
But before you judge another,
Just to lay his on the shelf,
It would be a splendid plan
To take a walk around yourself.

Open Face

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