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When Theology Wears You Out

Let's face it. Theology can beat you up and wear you out! And by theology, I mean our thoughts about God the Trinity in the light of Jesus, His Son. This ought not discourage us, but encourage us!

Why? In your thoughts about God you are wrestling with nothing less than the tremendous and staggering reality of the Father, Son and Spirit! The Only Relationship that is uncreated and has always existed!

Trying to grasp how good Their Love is will drive any thinking, created person bonkers! Our human brains in and of themselves simply cannot compute a relationship that Stunning and Fabulous!

This is encouraging because if we could fully grasp God then we would be God, or His thinking would be as limited and faulty as ours! Can you imagine the horror of YOU being God? Me being God? Yikes! Ha-Ha!

And because we cannot fully grasp the Father, Son and Spirit, we now have more wiggle room in our brains to think positively about how far SHORT our thoughts actually are when we embrace that God is Good! When we can grasp just an inkling of how Good the Good News is, then imagine how Good the Gospel REALLY is! You can't, because it is far better than you can ever imagine or put into words! Wowsa!

With that brief introduction, I would like to share something deep and simple with you for those times when theology wears you out and discourages you. I will start with the deep stuff and then paraphrase it in my own simple way for your encouragement.

The late Thomas Torrance puts it this way:

Hence, even when God draws near to us and draws us near to himself on the ground of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and gives us access to himself through Christ and in his Spirit to know him, in some real measure, as he is in the inner relations of his eternal being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he does not surrender (in Irenaean terms) his invisibility in the visibility, his incomprehensibility in the comprehensibility, of the incarnation, or therefore reduce knowledge of himself to what we can completely grasp or articulate. This is to say, in the mystery of God's self-revealing there is an inarticulate as well as an articulate ingredient, an unspecifiable as well as a specifiable factor, such that in our knowing God in his self-revelation it is the inarticulate or unspecifiable element that governs what is articulated and specified in the incarnation of his Son in Jesus Christ: we know more of him than we can ever tell. This is what St Paul, as we have seen, called the "great mystery of godliness," for the incarnate self-revelation of God is more to be worshipped in sheer wonder and praise than conceived and expressed, and as such regulates all sound doctrine. ~ The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being, Three Persons, pg. 81

That man knew how to think so good and broadly about God (in the Holy Spirit's grace) that just reading that paragraph gave me a theological knockout punch and wears me out completely! In fact, that is about as much as I can read in one of Torrance's books at any one sitting before I am completely worn out and theologically punch drunk! Ha-Ha! But I must admit it is the kind of

knockout punch I love!

Here is my simple paraphrase to explain why I love it and how it helps me (and perhaps can help you too!):

Even when God the Father, Son and Spirit helps us see Who He really is in His relationship by actually showing up in the flesh of Jesus, he doesn't show us everything. He still has some huge, invisible things about Himself that won't fit into the small pea brains of His adopted children, nor fitting for our babbling baby tongues to speak. God is so awesome there is something about him that must be spoken!

He is also so much more awesome than what we can speak that there truly are no fitting words! There is something so obvious about the closeness of God that you can put your finger on it. There is also something about the closeness of God that is so close you'll always miss the forest for the trees and never be able to put your finger on it.

In fact, it is these unthinkable and unspeakable things that are the foundation of the things thought and spoken about through Jesus Christ, God's Son made flesh. The Father, Son, and Spirit are so close and near to us NOW that each of us knows more about this Fabulous Trinity than we can ever communicate to anyone else! It is this mystery the Apostle Paul was speaking of when he wrote about the "great mystery of godliness".

In the end, it is better to experience Jesus through worship and praise! Jesus is the fullness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! When theology beats you up and wears you out, simply stand speechless and in jaw-gaping wonder at Jesus. That is much better than stressing out trying to think about how vast God is and fumbling over just the right words that would make Him fully known to others. In fact, all sound doctrine is founded upon this experience of standing speechless before the Loving and Relational Being of God, as revealed in the Person of Jesus.

Yes, it is awesome to contemplate the Trinity and to try and understand Him! We are compelled to do so! It is the glory of kings (humankind) to seek out a matter! Proverbs 25:2b. But it is even better to experience the Trinity, especially since it is the glory of God to conceal a matter! Proverbs 25:2a. Ha-Ha!

I offer up this Good News to YOU in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who not only Loves you more than He Loves Himself, but Who also Likes YOU (and I really do mean YOU!) very, very MUCH!

~ Tim Brassell