



May 19, 2020

The Power of Ideas

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Our first movement towards God is by choosing to place our minds upon him, and it is where the divine Spirit begins to direct our will to God and his ways. It is by keeping God present in our minds that we make steady progress toward him, "for those who seek God will be found by him." So then, it is not only an ability we possess to dwell upon God, but it is also a responsibility to be embraced.

In the realm of our minds, one of the most powerful elements is our ideas. It is our ideas that form the belief systems upon which we base our actions and decisions, with these shaping the trajectory of our lives. Paul warns those in the church at Ephesus not to live as those far from God, "in the futility of their thinking." He goes on to say, "they are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance in them" (Ephesians. 4:17-18). In a very real sense, he does not exist to them because they choose to live far from him. They have no idea who God is, what He is like, and the way He acts in his world. In life, they are quite literally stumbling around in the darkness.

The presence of God is our sufficiency in this life. Because of this, we must recognize the ideas systems surrounding us which constitute life away from God. They must be steadily replaced with the idea systems embodied and taught by Jesus Christ. A key component of the gospel is seeing that Jesus introduces us to the God that he knows, he proclaims to us the good news about God himself.

Now let's consider a big idea about the nature of God, a foundational issue, one in which I imagine we're all acquainted within the passage above. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." Now, is this true? Is God really like this? Does God really love the world? Does God really act in the world in this way? You see, if this is true then it changes everything. If this is true, I can trust God, and I can trust him with everything. So then, I don't have to run my life and fight with others over the bones of life like two dogs fighting in an alley. If this is true, I can release my life into God's hands. It means I can do what God says in confidence that it is a good thing, not something designed to make my life harder.

Practice: *Because we are warned to not live "in the futility of our thinking," to not separate ourselves from the life of God on the basis of a darkened understanding, it must be considered a very real danger. Take some time to reflect upon ways the ideas presented in John 3:16 run contrary to the idea systems that govern the present age and our culture?*

With the Affection of Christ,