



June 9, 2020

## The Antidote to Bad Ideas About God

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)*

In earlier devotionals, we touched upon the way the wounds we receive cause people to turn in on themselves. This inward bent limits our vision to such an extent that what consumes us is the pain we've experienced, and then we find ourselves imprisoned by our past hurts. We might think of our reaction when hitting our thumb with a hammer. Our whole body responds to the pain we've experienced and over the next several days we're very mindful of our thumb.

The sad truth is that we are all hurt in one way or another. But the greater tragedy, the heartbreaking truth is that we, in turn, become the sources of the pain and hurt in the lives of others. Thus, it should not be hard for us to see that we live in, "a world of hurt." And because of this inward bent that keeps our focus on ourselves and off God, we are forced into the hopeless posture of being our own saviors. Then, after many failures at this task, the resulting anger and desperation lead to the many ways we attack one another.

Let's face it, anger and desperation run deep in ordinary life, this is why it is so easy for us to provoke one another the way we do. We sense the despair and hopelessness of our situation. This is why the message that Jesus brings is so critical because it allows us to begin to correct our thinking about God and our circumstances. For starters, there really is a God who loves us and he has a wonderful plan for our life. And let me tell you, if you get ahold of that you'll be drawn to love God deeply, and all of a sudden, you're thinking of him constantly. The message that Jesus proclaimed, displayed, and taught, while it includes death for the forgiveness of our sins, was about the availability of the kingdom of God to meet us in our circumstances. Its message was about God's "with-us-ness" that makes a life beyond fear and desperation a real possibility.

**Practice:** *There is so much more to our relationship with God than just his dealing with our guilt and sin. Once we have been forgiven, we are meant to live in the fullness of the life that Jesus came to give us (John 10:10). Often our lives are crippled by a lack of vision. Take a moment to consider what would your lives be like if it was totally without fear. As you do this remember Jesus' words, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)*

With the Affection of Christ,