

I have been with you so long.....

Stephan Vosloo

I sometimes feel the pain of Jesus when He is ignored and rejected through my ignorance. When I have gone through an hour without acknowledging His presence, I sometimes cry out in experiencing His desire to be with me. It still blows my mind to realise that I can ignore the intimate presence of the Creator of the world and go on my merry way for an hour or a morning or if I am very busy for longer.

I am appalled that I can actually live without the manifest presence of His love for that long anymore. When I have had my early morning dose of being with Him, I can not contemplate that somewhere in the day I will lose the sense of safety and love but I do. The reason for that is that I am still looking for other things to comfort me. Like Philip, I say, 'Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us.' In my case it is not the Father I seek but the things of the world, like security, acceptance, love, success and my prayers often reflect the fact that I am unaware of the fact that finding Jesus will satisfy all desires.

There are often legitimate things that I seek, good things from the tree of good, but as with Philip's quest, Jesus' answer remains the same:

'Have I been with you such a long time and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. And how do you say, Show us the Father?' (Joh 14:8-9).

If we have seen Him then we have seen everything we need to see. He is the manifestation of the Father, the highest revelation bestowed upon mankind so all the things of the world we need, all the spiritual revelation, all holiness, all security, the heights of spirituality we seek, can be found in Him

The disciples had Jesus with them all the time and never realised that He was the revelation of the Father, that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. They saw Jesus but they did not see Him because they were looking for something else. We do not know Him because we are looking for something else. He says, 'Come to Me all you who labour and are heavily laden.'

This is why I am on about 'seeing Jesus'. We can be like the disciples who had Him with them all the time but missed the blessing that could have come from that because they were looking for something else. Can we be looking for evangelism, or signs and wonders, or community, or a new way to do church and miss him who has been with us for so long?

I see the propensity to organise revelation into something tangible all around me. We are not satisfied to just love Him who is with us, we want to organise that into some form of theological or structural format so that we can control it and feel good about what we have achieved. So a relationship with Jesus that supercedes the structural church becomes

‘The Emergent Church’, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in signs and wonders becomes ‘The Pentecostal Movement’ and when Jesus visits His children to play with them we call it ‘The Toronto Blessing’ and proceed to use it to further our ministries and dare to destroy it by projecting our own insecurities onto it.

And He is saying, ‘I have been with you so long.....’

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