



John 17:24-26

24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

25 "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.

26 "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

I was sitting in Pizzeria in West Milford NJ, and they were playing music at that level where it becomes just vague background noise and usually at that level I don't even recognize the songs unless I really like them or they really irritate me. I remember one song they played because it does fall into that second category. The chorus from it ALWAYS sets my teeth on edge. The song is called "Counting Blue Cars" by Dishwalla and the chorus goes-

*"Tell me all your thoughts on God?
'Cause I would really like to meet her.
And ask her why we're who we are.
Tell me all your thoughts on God,
Cause I am on my way to see her.
So tell me am I very far -
Am I very far now?"*

Now the chorus irritates me not merely because of the deliberate politically correct eye jab that is calling God **her**, but because of the implication that somehow **"all our thoughts on God"** would have some value. Let me try to explain to you what I mean by an analogy.

Let us say that astronomers detected what they believed to be a planet circling Alpha Centauri B and they called it Zoron B. And let's say I wanted to know what life on Zoron B was like, so I gathered together 100 people and I said "tell me all your thoughts on Zoron B because I'd really like to go there." Some might say "I don't think it exists" "some would say I don't know" others I'm sure would tell me what they thought Zoron B is like. But please understand, there is **no actual relationship between the opinions of those 100 people about Zoron B and Zoron B itself!** Because NONE of them have actually been there, and none of them know anyone who has. You could multiply the size of your sample from a hundred to a million, without actually getting any closer to knowing what Zoron B is really like. You could come up with statistics, "76% people think that Zoron B has" you could say that "the consensus of people is that Zoron B has an earthlike atmosphere" and yet none of those

statements would have any real value at all, because NONE of the people have any ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE about Zoron B.

And here is the really interesting thing. Let's say I could gather together 4 billion people who had NEVER been to Zoron B and ask for their opinions about what it's like there, and then I finally found a few people who actually knew a man who'd built a space craft and travelled to Zoron B and come back. Whose opinions would be more valuable? The 4 billion people who'd never been to Zoron B, or the small group who knew the only person who had? Well obviously the small group!

But the really tragic thing is, while we can see how that makes sense when it comes to something like a planet, we refuse to believe it when it comes to God or heaven. We really do act like pooling our ignorance about God, and salvation, and heaven has some value. But it doesn't. All of our "thoughts on God" are equally valueless if they have no relationship to reality. If you don't know God, and you've never been to heaven, and you don't know anyone who has then "all your thoughts on God" are actually just your imagination.

Well Andy, God the Father is not like Zoron B, a lot of people know God! Well Jesus says that's not true. Here He says "THE WORLD HAS NOT KNOWN YOU" In fact, he says that they only person who has known God is Jesus: "But I have known you" Therefore, only Christ is a source of true information about God. That statement is repeated again and again in the Gospel of John:

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 3:13 "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

In fact let's hear how John the Baptist summed it up in

John 3:31 "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

32 "And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

33 "He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

34 "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

35 "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

How can anyone know God the Father? Through the only one who truly knows Him and has revealed Him – Jesus Christ. But the world doesn't like that, they reject it. Why? Because of what Jesus reveals to us about God, about, heaven, and about salvation. He tells mankind that they are sinners, and that as John the Baptist put it, the wrath of God is upon them because of their sin, and that the only way to be saved, to be reconciled to God, and to have eternal life is to believe in the Son. So only by faith in Jesus Christ can we be saved. But the world naturally rejects that testimony and instead they'll take any opinion from the ignorance pool over the truth about God – hey they won't even accept Christ's word that God is the FATHER and not the MOTHER – why is that?

"God's work of redemption swims against the tide of man's determination to be the captain of his own soul and the master of his own fate. Sin in the heart, which issues in a lack of conformity to, and contradiction of, the law of God, is a willfully blinkered state of denial that God has any claims

upon me, assuming that he is even there. In the, “the wicked shall be turned into a hell’ they do not think they deserve, by a God they do not believe has any power to send them there.” – Gordon Keddie

So will anyone believe? Well in this Prayer Jesus lets us know that many will – all whom the Father Gave Him – every single one of them will Come to faith in Jesus and every single one of them will be with Him where He is – that is with Him in heaven and there they will truly behold His Glory. There the knowledge of believers will no longer be in part, but we will

1 Cor. 13:12 *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

We also learn from Christ’s words “**for You loved Me before the foundation of the world**” that the personal salvation of each and every believer turns upon God’s eternal love towards his only-begotten son. Salvation is not a product of the human will or our own efforts, but rather the everlasting plan and love of God -

Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth -- in Him.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Jesus declares three critically important things in verse 25 -

THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW THE FATHER

HE KNOWS THE FATHER

THE DISCIPLES KNOW THAT THE FATHER SENT JESUS

Jesus states that His disciples know the Father in Him. Because this is the case He is ready to die There remains a circle of followers able to proclaim the TRUE knowledge of God to others, telling people not about their “thoughts on God” but the truth about Him.

Jesus promised that He would continue to declare or reveal the Father to them, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The love of God in their hearts would ensure this

REMEMBER THESE THINGS: 1) the importance of God’s love in all of this, without it we would be lost. “We are loved into holiness, loved into pardon, loved into grace” – Thomas Manton

It is because of HIS LOVE that we are saved.

2) Remember that HIS LOVE to US through Christ saves us. NOT our love to Him.

3) Remember also there is a difference though between the permanent and unvarying effects of god's love and our fleeting and fickle sense of it. Sometimes we do not feel it and assume that God has stopped loving us, I is in those moments that we must remember that we can never be separated from it:

Romans 8:38 "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Jesus prays that the Love of the father would be in the disciples, this does not just mean among them but in them, and the Love of the Father can only be in you, if Christ is in you.

He asks that his followers be granted to see His preexistent glory with the Father

4) Jesus is not finished with us until we are like He is and with Him!

This is the fulfillment of the ancient desire for God to tabernacle or dwell amongst His people. Now in Christ, God does not merely dwell amongst us, but He dwells IN US. Truly this is the highest possible realization of "Immanuel" - God with us.

5) A FINAL THOUGHT ABOUT BEING WITH CHRIST WHERE HE IS:

Sinclair Ferguson – BBC famous people's thoughts on what heaven would be like, many different things, but all of them were lacking the presence of God, and certainly the presence of Christ

How different this is from the Christian conception – For the Christian, the MOST important thing about Heaven is that Christ will be there and we shall be with him, as JC Ryle put it: ***"We know little of heaven now. Our thoughts are all confounded, when we try to form an idea of a future state in which pardoned sinners shall be perfectly happy. "It does not yet appear what we shall be." (I John 3:2.) But we may rest ourselves on the blessed thought, that after death we shall be "with Christ." Whether before the resurrection in paradise, or after the resurrection in final glory, the prospect is still the same. True Christians shall be "with Christ." We need no more information. Where that blessed Person is who was born for us, died for us, and rose again, there can be no lack of anything. David might well say, "In Your presence is fullness of joy, and at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11.)"***