

December 1, 2008

## “Lights Are On—Nobody’s Home”, or, “Three’s A

### Crowd”?

Dear Friends & Family,

(11/11) I returned home the other night from a weekend of ministry in NY. I’m near the end of my 9<sup>th</sup> year of itinerant work. I had something happen this past Friday evening that I’ve never had happen to me before. A special youth meeting was planned & scheduled. I spent quite a considerable time setting up two large object lesson tables & one smaller object lesson display stand. I had sought the Lord that week; I had prayed; I prayed there on site with my host. After we prayed, the two of us sat there in the sanctuary waiting for the youth to come. Seven o’clock came, the starting time, & no one was there. Then, one teenage boy arrived. About 7:15, two more young teens arrived. That was it. I drove over 200 miles w/several hours of preparation for this meeting for *three teens*? I asked my host, “Are we competing with football?” He replied, “We’re competing with everything”. His youth group had already had their regular youth meeting just two nights before. The biggest miracle about this evening by far to me personally was that I was at total peace about it. I don’t even remember having one thought of disappointment, dismay, discouragement, etc. For ME, that is an absolute miracle! I knew it was JESUS’ peace! Many years ago, our kind Lord dealt with me re: my ambition to “go big” after pastoring children full-time then for the previous ten years. I sat there on the platform with the head pastor’s guitar & just started playing. I would do whatever my host felt to do. He was a bit discouraged, I think, as he heavily promoted the event. But, one thing he said a number of times that really tied into a major point of my message for the whole church family that following Sunday morning was, “This is the humility of the Lord”, (re: that Jesus would come so strongly & sweetly to such a small group; I will share more about this later), as he, like I, sensed Jesus’ strong peace & presence in the room. He decided to proceed with the meeting. I invited the mother of one of the teens to stay, which she did. We sang to the Lord, then I preached for about an hour. I gave them “the works”, i.e., both tables of object lessons, which are my “sermon notes”, as if there were 100 teens there. The kids would finish Scriptures that I began to quote, & ask questions throughout the message. I had the youth pastor & mother present to lay their hands on the boys’ & girl’s head respectively & ask Jesus to impart a blessing upon them, just as the Savior did while He was on earth when they brought children to Him. We then went to the kitchen, had some pizza & some “fun & fellowship”. If Jesus’ had not given me His heart re: the size of the crowd, I would have missed Him big time! Through *one* woman at the well, whom Jesus ministered to, revival took place in Samaria! (Jn.4). And I had *three kids & a parent*! Enough said.

### “The Baby, The Battle, The Blood, & The Basin”

In this awesome season of Christmas, I cannot express the wonder of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus better than Charles Hodge (one of my two favorite theologians; the other is John Murray), who taught at Princeton Seminary for 56 years, from 1822-1878. He writes: “The incarnation of the Son of God, His stooping to take into personal and perpetual union with Himself a nature infinitely lower than His own, was an act of unspeakable condescension...yet not only the assumption of human nature, but also all the circumstances by which it was attended enter into the humiliation of our Lord. Had He, when He came into the world, so manifested His glory, and so exercised His power, as to have coerced all nations to acknowledge Him as their Lord and God, and all kings to bow at His feet and bring Him their tributes, enthroning Him as the rightful and absolute sovereign of the whole earth, it would still have been an act of unspeakable condescension for God to become man. But to be a servant, to be born in a stable and cradled in a manger, to be so poor as not to have a place where to lay His head, to appear without form or comeliness so as to be despised and rejected of men—these circumstances make the condescension of our Lord to pass all comprehension”. (Chas. Hodge, Systematic Theology, edited by Edward N. Gross, © 1988; p.412; used by permission). Now for a recent insight given to me during study, prayer, & meditation re: the Lord’s humility seen in one of His many O.T. types, Solomon: I have been studying & preaching quite frequently since last May re: the Queen of Sheba’s visit to King Solomon in I Kgs. 10. I believe I “saw” a glimpse of Jesus I had never seen. I was in such deep awe

I could not take it in. The Queen, after having “seen Solomon’s wisdom, the house he had built (the Temple), the food on his table, the attendance of his waiters & their attire, the service of his servants, his cup-bearers, & the way in which Solomon ascended up the stairs to the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her (vv.4,5)...she was breathless” (II Chr. 9:4). With Solomon being the most profuse “divine wisdom displayer” in either Testament (except for the Lord Jesus, of course), wisdom which certainly would entail love & care for all of his subjects, I could not help but wonder if perhaps the queen asked him, “Are these your children?”, as she marveled at the way the king treated, dressed, & fed those surrounding his table. I envisioned Solomon replying (in that Shakespearian English accent which I often use for my *Time Machine* dramas), “My children? Heavens, No—they’re my *servants*”. It was here that I believe the Holy Spirit imparted to my heart & mind a glorious “breath-taking” glimpse of our Lord Jesus, sparked by the realization that Solomon was a type of Him. “The house he had built...” bespeaks of Jn.14:3: “I go to prepare a place for you...” “The food on his table...”: “You have prepared a table for me...you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows...” (Ps.23). If Solomon was so endowed with God’s wisdom, & hence, His love & care for His people, I couldn’t help wonder re: his love & service to his servants! If he typified Jesus, how could he not? Jesus said, “The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve” (Mt.20:28). At the Last Supper, it was Jesus Who arose from the table, took off His outer garment, got a **basin**, & proceeded to wash His disciples’ feet (Jn.13:4,5). He said, “I am among you as One Who serves”(Lk.22:27). The vs. that floored my heart & made me want to hide myself under 40 feet of earth re: my grave unworthiness & inability to take it in, i.e., *HIM* in, was Lk.12:37:“Happy are those slaves (that’s us) whom the Lord, after He comes, shall find watching. Verily I say to you that He shall gird Himself about, & shall have them recline at table, & will come forth & minister to them”. “...after He comes...”?, as in, Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, after He decimates all of His enemies in **battle** by the breath of His mouth, in blazing fire w/His holy angels, wearing His robe dipped in **blood**?! (Rev.19:11ff; II Thess.1:7). Is He describing the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev.19:9)? Something tells me He is, Beloved! “Hey!”, one may retort, “I thought His humiliation was over after the incarnation & cross!”. Not so! For one thing, He has chosen to *eternally* condescend to those He loves, by remaining the glorified God-MAN forever! I myself thought His humility was over here & *more than enough*! Not so! Jesus says He will arise from His the table & minister to us! If this is true, I can’t take it in, dear brothers & sisters, I can’t take it in! I so identify with Peter: “No, Lord! You shall *never* wash my feet! Jesus, I’ll *never* let You wait on me! No way! I should wait on YOU!”. Do you see it, Church? As if our Wondrous Savior hadn’t done enough. I was so broken when I saw this, that I ached to convey it to His people, through His Word & by His Spirit. It is amazing how we “see” Jesus via WORDS! I truly pray these humble thoughts will magnify Your understanding of Him, during this Christmas Season, where we celebrate His unfathomable humiliation & condescension in being born a **baby**. Seeing this enables us even more to exclaim, “O come, let us adore Him!”. **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!! Michael &**

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[Please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485. Thanks!]

[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home missionary, endorsed by his local church. He supports his family & his ministry by faith in the Lord & His provision through His people.]

Ministry/events for DECEMBER & those not listed in last month’s newsletter:

Nov. 2: Spring City Fellowship, Spring City, PA: Sun. am family service

Nov. 16: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: summer campers’ water baptism service

Nov. 20: S. Jersey Elim Area credential holders’ mtg., Marlton, NJ

Nov. 23: Life Line Center North, Reading, PA: (2) Sunday a.m. morning services

- Dec. 2: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: camp board mtg//pastors' mtg**
- Dec. 4: Life Line Center South, Reading, PA: inner city children's service**
- Dec. 7: Hope For The Nations Church, Reading, PA: Sun. am family service**
- Dec. 9: Urban Promise Christmas program, Wilmington, DE**
- Dec. 13: New Life Church, Bordentown, NJ: Sat. pm family service**