

Predestined to Drama

Genesis 50:15-21

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Peter Hiatt

Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/predestined-to-drama/>

Transcript document prepared by: Brett Eades (brett@thesanctuarydowntown.org)

This document was prepared by Brett Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Brett know. Thank you!

Message

Video Clip: Daytime TV Commercials 1960s | Days of Our Lives intro
Our Nostalgic Memories: (2021, Sep 14, YouTube,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEf_XD2Eskl)

Black and white footage of a camera panning in slowly on an hourglass with sand dropping through it.

Announcer: Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives. This is Macdonald Carey and these are the days of our lives.

Do you remember that? If you were a kid in the 1960's you do. This is hard to believe, but in the olden days there were only four channels on the TV, so if you had the flu and had to stay home from school, you'd lie on the couch and watch "As the World Turns" or "Days of our Lives." I don't remember any story lines, just a whole lot of drama—and by that, I mean people just talking, and talking, and feeling emotions.

It kind of reminded me of church: my dad was a pastor and I loved him dearly, but, to me, pastoring just looked like a whole lot of drama. At the time everyone was talking about warm fuzzies and feelings, but I had learned that a lot of feelings were fake, and they couldn't always be trusted. I wanted to be a geologist. I am a rock. I am an island. And a rock feels no pain and an island never cries.ⁱ

Well, if I wasn't sick, "The Days of Our Lives" made me sick; I still associate the word "Drama" with nausea. But I would be OK if I could just hang in there until 4:30—if I remember correctly—that's when Star Trek came on.ⁱⁱ

Video Clip: *Star Trek, The Trouble with Tribbles*
Desilu Productions (1966-1969)

Various episode clips of Chief Science Officer Spock (Leonard Nimoy), a non-human character aboard a science space exploration ship, and other shipmates discussing various topics that display his emotionless demeanor.

I loved Mr. Spock, and I loved how he handled his emotions. In that last clip, he started doing math: “6, 6, times 6.” I once read that the renowned French mathematician, Thomas De Lagny passed 36 hours in silence on his deathbed. He did not react when his beloved spoke to him. But when someone asked, “Do you still know how much 67 to the 2nd power is?” he smiled, answered “4,489,” and then died.



For Mr. Spock Logic is unemotional and emotion is illogical. I studied geology, but God kind of tricked me into being a pastor, and so I’ve thought a lot about logic and emotion, science and faith. The Bible has a word for logic and the word is “Logos;” it’s usually translated “Word,” but it’s also translated as “Reason.” The Bible doesn’t have such an obvious word for “emotion” or “feeling,” and yet I’m fairly sure that folks in the Bible had “feelings.”

In the Old Testament there are all sorts of words that describe what we would call “emotion.” In the New Testament there is one word group, in particular, that probably comes closest to our word, “emotion.” It’s a group of words all based on the verb *pascho* and the noun *pathos* or *pathema*, which gets translated as “passion” or “suffering,” which confuses us—for we talk about Christ’s passion as the definition of The Good, and we also talk about passions as something that could be quite evil. But it all makes a little sense when you realize that to have *pathos*, in classical Greek, is to be affected by something that you cannot control like a cross, or an emotion. And to be *apathos*, is to be apathetic; it is to be unmoved, unmotivated, dead.

There once was a man who saw that love produced arguments, jealousy, and sorrow. He saw that love sometimes led to great pain. He decided to keep his life undiminished by the wretched drama of Love. When he died, he walked up to God and presented his life—undiminished, unsoiled, unmarred—he proudly said, “Here is my life!” And God said, “What life?”

Well, no matter what, for most of us, drama appears to be a problem. So, we either, try to ignore emotions (we get apathetic) or we try to manufacture emotions, we get all “dramatic,” which isn’t actually experiencing emotion, but faking emotion—which will make you nauseas. So, like I was saying, for most of us, drama appears to be a problem. If you listen to our prayers, you’ll discover that we almost constantly pray for a life without drama, even if we’re trying to be all “dramatic” about it. “Oh Lord, just let the trip go smoothly; Don’t let there be any complications; Keep me safe and everyone around me safe, safety first—No drama please.” So, it’s a little shocking to hear St Paul pray, “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and share in his *‘pathema,’* his passion, his sufferings, his drama.”ⁱⁱⁱ We like Passion Plays, but not actual passion!

In the fall we’ll start a new series, but recently I’ve been scanning the Old Testament looking for stories that jump out at me and that, perhaps, I haven’t preached upon. A few weeks ago, I read the story of Joseph all in one sitting, and thought, “Wow this is super dramatic” and then “Wow, he was predestined for drama.” You would think that if everything was going according to plan, there would be no “drama”—isn’t that why we make plans? To avoid “drama?” But God plans the “drama.”

I’m counting on the fact that you basically know the story (it takes up about a third of Genesis), but I’ll abbreviate it now and read a few choice morsels. In Genesis 37, Seventeen-year-old Joseph has a few dreams. Joseph is the firstborn son of Jacob/Israel by his true love Rachel. Joseph has eleven brothers: ten older born to Leah and the slave-girls Bilhah and Zilpah, and one younger, also born of Rachel, named Benjamin. Eventually the twelve brothers become the nation of Israel. Scripture tells us that because Reuben, the firstborn of Leah, had sex with his stepmother Bilhah, the birthright passed to Joseph, Jacob’s favorite.^{iv} The ten older brothers are extremely jealous of Joseph.

So, seventeen-year-old Joseph has a dream, and he makes the apparent mistake of telling his brothers—he dreams that during the harvest, his brother’s sheaves bow down to his sheaf. And then Joseph dreams that the Sun, Moon, and eleven stars bow down to him. And apparently God gave him these dreams. How many of you had dreams when you were seventeen years old? How many of you have seen all those dreams come true? Well Joseph dreams a pretty amazing dream. Sun, moon, and eleven stars, seem to at least represent Joseph’s Dad and Mom (who is now dead), and his eleven brothers. But Sun, Moon, and stars, might also be Sun, Moon, and stars and as David writes in Psalm 148:3 Sun, moon, and stars praise the Lord.” Well, already, we’ve got hope, jealousy, and a boatload of confusing emotions, all amped up on steroids because of a dream. His father sends him on an errand to his ten older brothers herding sheep in the field. And when they see him coming...

Genesis 37.19-20:

They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰ Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.

His oldest brother Reuben convinces them to throw him in the pit alive. And then his older brother Judah convinces them to sell him to “Ishmaelites,” who then take him to Egypt and sell

him as a slave. The ten older brothers, then tell Jacob/Israel that Joseph was eaten by wild animals, and Jacob just will not be comforted...

Genesis 37:34-35:

Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol (to hell) to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

That’s a lot of drama: Trust and betrayal, dreams and shattered dreams, unspeakable loss, and confusion—you wonder how they survived, Joseph in particular? Well, Joseph becomes a slave in the house of Potiphar, the captain of the guard. And God blesses Joseph and Potiphar’s house such that Joseph is put in charge of all that Potiphar has. But Potiphar’s wife thinks Joseph is a thing that she wants to have, and when he refuses her advances, she accuses him of rape, and Potiphar throws him in the Kings dungeon. Lust, sex, rape, blessing and cursing, dreams, and shattered dreams: that’s a lot of drama. In Prison, God blesses Joseph again, the keeper of the prison puts Joseph in charge of prison affairs. And, one night he interprets the dreams of Pharaoh’s baker and cupbearer, who had been thrown into the prison with him. When the baker is executed and the cupbearer is restored to Pharaoh, the cupbearer, who said that he’d remember Joseph, forgets Joseph for 2 years. But when Pharaoh has a dream, the cupbearer remembers Joseph, and as you know, Joseph interprets the Pharaoh’s dream. Pharaoh believes Joseph and puts him in a position of power only second to himself and gives him his own daughter as a bride. But this is thirteen years after his brothers threw him in the pit. Joseph is 30.

For seven years Joseph oversees an abundant harvest, but then, as he prophesied from Pharaoh’s dream, the famine begins to hit Egypt and Canaan, and Joseph begins to sell the Pharaoh’s grain. Fearing starvation, Jacob sends the ten older brothers to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph is now about 38 or 39, clean shaven, and dressed as Egyptian royalty. The brothers don’t recognize him, but he recognizes his brothers.

Genesis 42:8-9:

And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. ⁹And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, “You are spies...”

The brothers defend themselves saying, “we’re all the sons of one man, the youngest is at home, and one brother is no more.” Joseph puts them in prison for three days.

Genesis 42:18-24:

On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, ²⁰and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they did so. ²¹Then they said to one another, “In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon

us.”²² **And Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood.”**

²³ **They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them.** ²⁴ **Then he turned away from them and wept.**

That’s drama! Joseph then comes back, takes his older brother Simeon into custody, and sends them off with sacks of grain. But unbeknownst to the nine brothers, Joseph has commanded his servants to put the brother’s money back in those sacks of grain—the grain is now a judgment of grace. When the brothers see the money in the sacks, they freak out, in biblical lingo “their hearts fail them.” When they arrive at home, they’re all filled with fear, and Jacob/Israel says, “You’ve bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin?”

Reuben says “kill my two sons if I don’t return Benjamin to you,” but Jacob refuses. He refuses, until a year or so later, when they had eaten all the grain and were beginning to starve. It’s then that Judah pleads with Jacob, to let them take Benjamin to Egypt in order to get Simeon and more grain. He says to Jacob:

Genesis 43:9:

I will be a pledge of [Benjamin’s] safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.

At that, Jacob lets them take Benjamin and go. When they arrive in Egypt, they confess that they had found the money in their sacks, but Joseph’s Steward responds as Joseph had obviously instructed him to respond saying, “Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money.” Then Joseph arrives and sees his little brother Benjamin, his mother’s other son, standing with the brothers that had betrayed and condemned him to death and bondage.

Genesis 43:30-31:

Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there.³¹ Then he washed his face and came out. And controlling himself he said, “Serve the food.”

He eats separately, for it was an abomination for Egyptians to eat with Hebrews, but Joseph sends immense portions to Benjamin, and yet the brothers, didn’t seem jealous. They drank and were, v. 34, “Merry with him (Benjamin, that is).” Once again Joseph fills their sacks with grain, but this time he has his servants put his own chalice in Benjamin’s sack. As the brothers are leaving Egypt, Joseph’s servants overtake the brothers and accuse them of stealing the chalice, of repaying good with evil. The brothers say, “Whichever of us is found with the chalice will surely die, and the rest of us will be your slaves.” When the chalice is found in Benjamin’s sack, they all tear their clothes in grief and in terror. In custody at Joseph’s house, Judah throws himself at Joseph’s feet crying out

Genesis 44:16, “God has found out the guilt of your [slaves]...”

In agony, for most of chapter 44, Judah explains the situation to Joseph.

Genesis 44:20, ‘We have a father, and old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him...

Genesis 44:33 “Now therefore, please let your [slave] remain instead of the boy... and let the boy go back with his brothers.”

Genesis 45:1-15:

Then Joseph could not control himself [highly illogical according to Spock] before all those who stood by him. He cried, “Make everyone go out from me.” So, no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. ⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God... ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry... ¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them.

That’s a lot of drama. And of course, as you can imagine, there’s much more drama when they return and tell Jacob: Genesis 45:26, “his heart became numb for he did not believe them.”

Genesis 46:29-30:

Then Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen. He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰ Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive.”

Drama! But Jacob/Israel lives much longer, Joseph saves Egypt, and then Jacob gathers all his sons and blesses them, with the Birthright going to Joseph’s two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh.

Genesis 49:33-50:3:

When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people. ⁵⁰ Then Joseph fell on his father’s face and wept over him and kissed him. ³ ... And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.

The Egyptians and Hebrews all go to Canaan to bury Jacob/Israel. The mourning is so great that the Canaanites name the place Abel-mizraim, which means “the mourning of Egypt.”

When they return to Egypt, absent their father, the brothers begin to fear.

Genesis 50:15-21:

They said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.”¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died:¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.” ’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him.¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” You may have noticed: this is the dream that came to Joseph when he was 17.¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus, he comforted them...

That’s a hell of a lot of drama. And yet, the dream happened and is happening. “You meant it, [*chashab*: planned it] for evil, but God planned it for good?”

1. What is “it”?

Well, it’s One day (right?), and yet it’s all the days dependent on that one day, and that might just be every day, including this day, for the Promised Seed was in Judah (and Joseph saves Judah), and miraculously, perhaps the Seed is even in Joseph. According to the flesh, Jesus comes through the line of Judah. And yet, according to Scripture, the birthright belonged to Joseph... and the brothers had been jealous of the birthright. Well, “it,” was a hell of a lot of drama—they planned it for evil. And yet, God planned it, all that drama for Good.

2. Who’s plan happens? Who gets his will? And what is God’s will?

Well, God gets his will—he preserves life.

3. Who’s life? Or What life?

Well, Israel’s life (Jacob and all his sons), Egypt’s life because Joseph saves Egypt, and maybe all life, for Jesus is the Life—he’s the Promised Seed; he’s the “remnant” of Israel. “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for Good?” And so, the dream--Joseph’s dream that was God’s dream—came true. But how did the dream come true? Did Joseph sit in Potiphar’s prison planning ways that he could make his brother’s bow down to him? Did Joseph make the dream come true, or did God make the dream come true, or did God make it come true through Joseph?

- How did the dream come true?
- How did Joseph live such a graceful, beautiful, and glorious life?
- How did Joseph not kill himself in prison or kill his brothers twenty years later?
- How did Joseph become such a Vessel of Mercy, to use Paul’s words in Romans?
- How did Joseph get through from start to finish?

- How did Joseph do that?

Well, it seems to me...

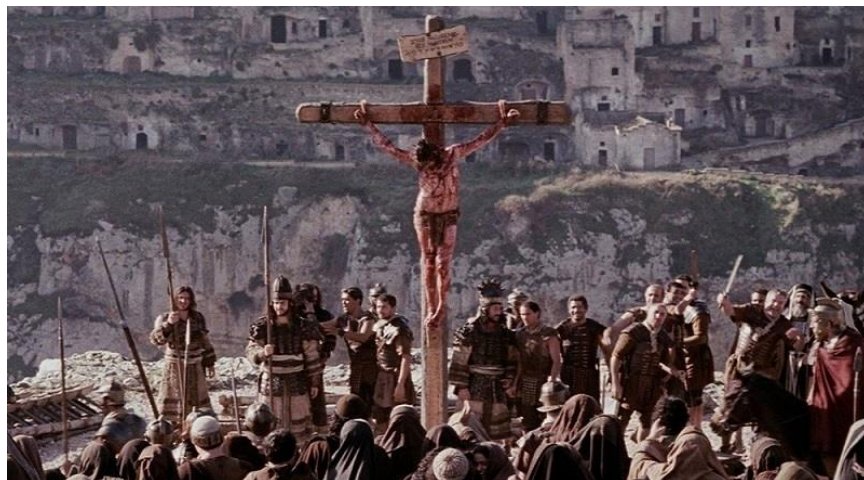
1. Somehow, and I think this is a miracle, Joseph didn't trust his circumstances, and at least a bit, he came to have faith in the Dream... or Faith was the Dream in Joseph.
2. Somehow, and I think this is a miracle, Joseph hoped that it was God's dream, or Hope was God's Dream in Joseph.

And so, Joseph knew that the Dream was predestined to happen. And so, no matter what EVIL might plan, evil could only be part of God's plan, which is the GOOD.

3. He wept, and wept, and wept in sorrow and in joy; he allowed himself to be emotional.

He wept. Have you ever tried to make yourself—that is force yourself to—weep? If you succeed, you're probably not really weeping, but acting, which is fake drama, and will make everyone nauseas. We all have plenty of legitimate reasons to weep, in sorrow and in joy, but to really weep you have to allow yourself to weep. And I think there's a word for that, and the word is "forgive."

Western Christians, and particularly Evangelical Christians, have turned that word into a small thing, that has to do with a transactional exchange, that's sometimes referred to as penal substitutionary atonement, which is partly right and, yet, terribly wrong and the subject of other sermons.^v In the New Testament, the word usually translated "forgive" is not a small word that explains why God won't torture you for cheating on your taxes; it's a huge word that explains everything that's anything. It's the Greek word, "*aphiemi*," which is translated "forgive, allow" or "let," as in "let there be light, let there be trees, let there be man in my own image." So, when Jesus cries, "father forgive them," he's crying "father let them." And when Joseph forgives, he's doing the same.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). *The Passion of the Christ* [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

In Genesis 50, the Hebrew word translated "forgive" (*nasa*) is usually translated "lift, carry," or "bear." So, in the name of the father, the brothers ask Joseph to "bear" their sin, and he did.

“Love bears all things.” He forgave it, he wept it, because he bore it and because he bore it, his mourning turned into dancing and his sorrow turned into Joy. But how could Joseph bear such emotional pain, how did he weep?

You know: “Jesus wept.” But, in Hades they “weep and gnash their teeth,” according to Jesus. I think that describes someone who needs to weep but won’t let themselves weep, and so they grit their teeth like a child resenting discipline, or a man trying to prove that he’s capable, logical, and in control—a man in “control,” or a Vulcan.

- How did Joseph weep with such freedom?
- How could he bear to feel, what he must’ve felt, by Genesis chapter 50?
- How do you bear to feel the feelings that you actually allow yourself to feel?

Have you ever read a book or watched a movie, and started to weep in sorrow and then, perhaps, weep in joy? How is it that you allow yourself to feel what you feel in the movie? Doesn’t it happen because:

1. You believe the dream—someone told you that the movie is good. SO
2. You know that everything bad is intended for good, so tears of sorrow aren’t wasted, they’re predestined to turn into joy.
3. You don’t believe that your identity is dependent on the drama in the film—in other words: Your ego is detached from the story; you didn’t write the story, and you are not determined by the story (It’s not “your story”)

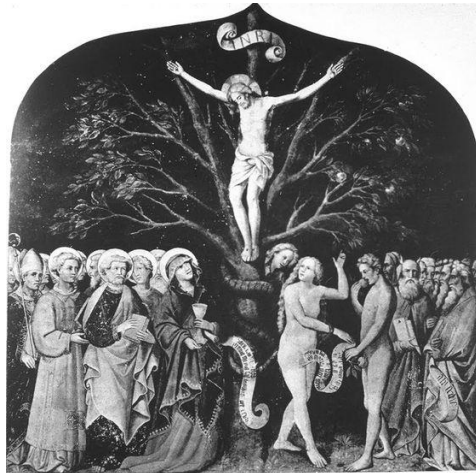
And so, you allow yourself to feel a little of what the characters feel, so you find yourself weeping with those who weep and laughing with those who laugh; Your ego is detached from the story, and so you allow yourself to identify with the characters in the story. You don’t create the characters in the story and yet—and this is the miracle—the characters in the story may create you. You may lose yourself in the Drama and then discover the Drama in you (And now, it is “your story.”)

You watch Superman without fear, and then become a little more courageous like superman—you recognize Superman in you. You watch Titanic without fear for yourself, and then think: “Even if it hurts, I’d like to love my wife, and sacrifice for my wife, like Jack loved Rose and sacrifice for Rose”—and Jack begins to rise within you, even without thinking, especially without thinking, without self-consciousness. You watch The Passion of the Christ—and then one day you realize that Christ has become the passion within you. And that’s the miracle. But if you watch a movie, and don’t believe the dream, and so don’t trust that the author is good, and yet begin to identify with the story. You’ll check out of the story, when the movie gets too frightening or intense; you’ll get busy like my son Coleman used to do when the movie got to be too scary: I’d say, “Coleman are you scared?” and he’d say, “No daddy I just need to adjust the seat, tie my shoes, take care of some stuff; I’m not afraid.”

If you don’t believe the dream, trust the author, and yet identify with the story, you’ll walk out of the movie at the scary part, in which case, your psyche will be stuck on the last frame of the movie that freaked you out of the story. You’ll try to tear a page from the novel, in which case

you won't be able to understand the novel, and you'll carry that page with you in your pocket. You'll carry it with you, at least until you let the author put it back in the book, and you begin to see that that the tears of sorrow actually turn into the tears of Joy—brothers weeping and laughing together as God always intended.

Well, you see, maybe Joseph lived his life the way that you read a great book or watch a good movie—he experienced it, somehow detached from his ego for he knew that no matter what, he was the Beloved, and God was the author of the story, not his brothers, not Potiphar, not himself, not me-sus. He learned to live his life detached from his ego—the illusion that he was the author of his own story. And yet, by the end of the story, he becomes exactly who it was that he had always truly been—not the Dreamer, but the Dream.^{vi} Now my words will fail at this point, but I'll try anyway: Joseph didn't live his life; his Life lived him. Or, I could say it this way: Joseph didn't live his life; until he let The Life live him. And that Life came to him as drama. And now, before you write me off, let me show you a picture of the Life.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

The Life is hanging on a tree in the middle of a garden, at the edge of space and time, yet in the Sanctuary, that is your soul.

- This is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- This is the Logos; this is the Logic of God; this is the Logic of Love.
- This is the Emotion, behind all motion, “in this is Love.”

So, what is Emotion? Well, I don't think it's a lack of Logic. It's actually more Logic than you or I can comprehend; It's logic that comprehends us, it's the logic of Love, and God is Love. You cannot comprehend Love, but when Love comprehends you, you experience its movement as feelings of joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, temperance, freedom, compassion—the logic of Love—it compels you to move, to emote, to do what Love wills to do and do it in freedom.

But Spock has a valid point, “Doctor, I have noted that the healthy release of emotion is frequently very unhealthy for those closest to you.” In other words, there are unhealthy emotions. So, what is an unhealthy emotion? Well emotions move us, like a jet airplane or a racecar. But

what is the most unhealthy, dangerous, type of jet airplane or racecar? Is it one that can't even move, like a pile of junk? Or is it one that's moving at several hundred miles an hour with just one screw about to jiggle loose? So, what's the unhealthy, (evil), emotion of a Judas, or a Hitler? Isn't it good emotion, that's been infected with a lie? And what's the lie if not "I can comprehend the logic of love, and so use the Logic of Love to save myself and save my world."

Judas wanted to save Judah, and his logic told him that he was the solution, and so he decided to turn Jesus in and force his hand. Hitler wanted to save Germany, and his logic told him that he knew how, so he took vengeance, he began to judge, and tried to save, but everyone died. "The madman is not the man who has lost his reason," wrote Chesterton. "The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason, [his logos.]"^{vii} The madman is the man who's been to the tree in the garden and listened to a lie—"take knowledge from the tree and make yourself in the image of God." The madman is the man who considers the Logos to be his own private possession; and so, he crucifies Love and the Logic dies.

So how do bad emotions become the good emotion we call Love? Well, it's not by repressing your emotions, so you feel nothing and do nothing; for a life with no emotion is no life at all. It's not by repressing your emotions and faking new emotions; it's not by works righteousness—which is nauseating as hell. It's not by repressing your emotions and faking new emotions. And it's not by simply expressing your emotions for just like Mr. Spock noted, that can be "very unhealthy to those around you." It's not by taking more knowledge from the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil and then trying harder to make your dead life live. It's not by trying to live your life, which is already imprisoned in death; It can only happen when you come back to the tree, and instead of trying to live your life, you begin to let The Life live you.

[Spock B]

Y'all know why we love Spock:

- He's just like each one of us: half machine and half human. And he's afraid to let the Human live.
- He's afraid to let Jesus rise from the tomb that is himself.
- He's afraid to lose his life and find his life lost in the logic of Love.
- He's in prison, for he's afraid to let Love live his Life... for you see it comes to him, and it comes to you, as drama—the drama that is actually your life.

[Fall and Redemption]

As I was saying:

- This is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- This is the Logos; this is the Logic of God; this is the Logic of Love.
- This is the Emotion, behind all motion, "in this is Love."

"In this is Love," and it's Love that creates everything that's anything and then binds all things together in a communion called Life. This is the Life—the Life that must live you, which you

will experience as drama... or to say it more biblically—the Passion of the Christ. You will experience it as pain and forgiveness. You will experience it as sorrow that turns into unspeakable joy...and not because of you, but because of Christ rising within you. God does not save you from drama; He saves you with his drama, his Passion, in you.

Joseph said, “Am I in the place of God?” The obvious answer is no. But was God in the place of Joseph? The obvious answer is yes. Joseph looks just like Jesus. Man cannot make himself God—that’s evil; but apparently God can make himself Man—that’s Good, the Good in flesh, the Body of Christ.

Paula D’Arcy writes, “God comes to us disguised as our life.”^{viii} He comes to us as “the days of our lives.”

Psalm 139 “In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.” He comes to us as “the days of our lives,” and we must live those days.

Ephesians 2:10 “We are... created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them,” that we should live them.

Jean Guyon wrote, “Perhaps you have heard that you should think on the different experiences of Jesus Christ. But it is far better for you to bear, to carry, these experiences of Jesus Christ within yourself.”^{ix}

In Genesis 50 that concept is described as “forgiveness.” Joseph bears the sins of his brothers, but Joseph also bears the Passion of the Christ within his own body; Jesus bears the sins, but within Joseph, his body. Joseph feels what Jesus is feeling within him—he weeps his tears and experiences his laughter. Love is the dream, rising from the dead within Joseph. Forgiveness is “letting” the passions of the Christ flow through you, like living water through a pipe, or blood through a blood vessel—a vessel of mercy, rather than a vessel of wrath. We become a vessel of wrath, when we seize control of the logic of love, and refuse to feel the feelings of God, for we think we’ll die, when, in reality, we’re already dead. And God is calling us to rise from the dead with the power of his Word. And so, the Word, who is the Logic of Love, who is the Life, the Truth, and the Way—the Way through all the drama and home to the Dream.

Communion

He took bread and broke it saying, this is my body given to you and he took the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me.

This is the Passion of God, the Logic of Love, the Emotion behind all motion. If you think that this [the cross] is simply the tree of knowledge, you will try to steal the logic, in order to avoid the passion—the passion, which is your life.^x But if you trust that this is also the tree of Life, you will surrender your life to the Logic of Love and begin to live the Passion of the Christ.^{xi} And

you will trust, for at this tree, God has planted a seed in you—a seed, which isn't simply your dreams, it's his dream. You will be what you truly are: the image and likeness of God—It's your birthright.

Romans 8:16 “We are the children of God... heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ (our brother) provided we suffer with him (*sympascho*—feel what he feels) that we may also be glorified with him (*syndoxozo*—experience the glory he experiences).” You see, the Sun, Moon, and Stars bow down to our brother Jesus.

Romans 8:19 “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.”

Sun, Moon, and Stars will also bow down to you, provided you feel what Jesus feels, and what Jesus feels is the emotion you refuse to feel right now. So, bring your feelings to the table of the Lord, this morning, and every morning. Say, “Jesus I feel like crap, or I feel proud, or I feel ashamed, or I feel horny, or I feel lonely, or angry, or sad, or just depressed beyond words.” And then ingest the Word, the Logic of Love. And then ask, “How do you feel Jesus?” or better yet, “How do we feel, Jesus?” That's the way home to who it is that you truly are.^{xii} Not the dreamer, but the dream.

Benediction

So just tell Jesus how you feel. Give him your feelings and then they are his feelings, and then you can weep with the one who weeps and laugh with the one who laughs. And the shared drama will bring you home. And we didn't have time to talk about this, but also weep with your neighbor and laugh with your neighbor. You don't have to fix your neighbor; you have to feel what your neighbor is feeling—and then you'll discover that what really needs to be fixed has just been fixed. You are one body—motivated by Love—the Logic that is God.

In other words, “Believe the Gospel. Amen.”

Endnotes

ⁱ At the time, I don't think I understood that Simon and Garfunkel were implying that being an emotionless rock island was a bad thing.

ⁱⁱ Of course, Star Trek is also a drama, but I doubt that that occurred to me at the time—it was “science fiction;” it had the word “science” in it. If “science” is not a part of a greater drama—if science is an idol—then science becomes its own drama, its own religion.

ⁱⁱⁱ Philippians 3:10

^{iv} Genesis 35:22, 1 Chronicles 5:1-2

^v <https://relentless-love.org/sermons/relativity-and-the-reason-that-is-right-christmas/>
<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/prophecy-107-retribution/>

^{vi} *They tell me, Lord, that when I seem to be in speech with you,
Since but one voice is heard, it's all a dream, one talker aping two.
Sometimes it is, yet not as they conceive it. Rather, I
Seek in myself the things I hoped to say, but lo!, my wells are dry.*

*Then, seeing me empty, you forsake the listener's role and through
My dumb lips breathe and into utterance wake the thoughts I never knew.
And thus you neither need reply nor can; thus, while we seem
Two talkers, thou art One forever, and I no dreamer, but thy dream.*
--C S Lewis

^{vii} The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason. . . . Perhaps the nearest we can get to expressing it is to say this: that his mind moves in a perfect but narrow circle. A small circle is quite as infinite as a large circle; but, though it is quite as infinite, it is not so large. . . . A pattern can stretch for ever and still be a small pattern.
– GK Chesterton, *Orthodoxy: The Romance of Faith*

^{viii} If a man believes and knows God, he can no longer ask, What is the meaning of my life? But by believing he actually lives the meaning of his life, the meaning of his creatureliness, of his individuality, in the limits of his creatureliness and individuality and in the fallibility of his existence, in the sin in which he is involved and of which daily and hourly he is guilty; yet he also lives it with the aid which is daily and hourly imparted to him through God's interceding for him, in spite of him, and without him deserving it.
- Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (London: SCM Press LTD., 1949), p. 26

One must completely abandon any attempt to make something of oneself, whether it be a saint, or a converted sinner, or a churchman (a so-called priestly type), a righteous man or an unrighteous one, a sick man or a healthy one. By... living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world—watching with Christ in Gethsemane. That, I think, is faith; that is metanoia (repentance); and that is how one becomes a man and a Christian (cf. Jer. 45!). How can success make us arrogant, or failure lead us astray, when we share in God's sufferings through a life of this kind?
--Dietrich Bonhoeffer quoted in Eric Mataxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (Thomas Nelson, Nashville: 2010) p. 484

Gordon Dalby tells a remarkable story about a man who was plagued by a recurring dream, a nightmare "in which a ferocious lion kept chasing the man until he dropped exhausted and awoke screaming." The man was dismayed; he did not know what the dream meant. Was the lion a symbol of fear? Something in his life overwhelming him? One day the man was guided by his pastor (a friend of Dalby's) to revisit the dream in prayer:

As they prayed, [the pastor] on impulse invited the man to recall the dream, even in all its fear. Hesitantly, the man agreed, and soon reported that indeed, the lion was in sight and headed his way. [The pastor] then instructed the man, "When the lion comes close to you, try not to run away, but instead, stand there and ask him who or what he is, and what he's doing in your life . . . can you try that?" Shifting uneasily in his chair, the man agreed, then reported what was happening: "The lion is snorting and shaking his head, standing right there in front of me . . . I ask him who he is . . . and-Oh! I can't believe what he's saying! He says, "I'm your courage and your strength. Why are you running away from me?"
- John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), p. 148

^{ix} . . . abandonment is the means that the Lord will use to give you revelation. The revelation you receive will come to you as reality . . . Perhaps you have heard that you should *think* on the different experiences of Jesus Christ. But it is far better for you to bear, to carry, these experiences of Jesus Christ *within* yourself.

This is the way it was in the life of Paul. He did not ponder the sufferings of Christ; he did not consider the marks of suffering on the Lord's body. Instead, Paul bore in his own body the experiences of his Lord. He even said, "I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 6:17) Did he do so by considering such marks? No. Jesus Christ had personally imprinted Himself upon Paul.

-Jeanne Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus*, p. 41-42

^x God is not an answer man can give, God says. God himself does not give answers. He gives himself, and into the midst of the whirlwind of his absence gives himself.
- Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), p. 43

^{xi} Remember that there are two ways of knowing in Scripture, one produces death—it's murder and rape. And the other produces Life, that is babies. Bride of Christ, it's your husband on the tree. How will you know him? As information you can use, 14

knowledge of Good and evil? Or as a life that knows you and thus impregnates you with himself. The cross is a tree of Knowledge that is transformed into the tree of Life, by the death and resurrection of Jesus, The Good that is the Life of God.

^{xiii} Then our Lord made me think happily, 'Where is there now one jot of your pain or your sorrow?' And I was very happy. I understood that we are now, as our Lord intends it, dying with him on his cross in our pain and our passion; and if we willingly remain on the same cross with his help and his grace until the final moment, the countenance he turns on us will suddenly change, and we shall be with him in heaven. There will be no time between one moment and the next, and everything will be turned to joy; and this is what he meant in this showing: 'Where is there now one jot of your pain or your sorrow?' And we shall be entirely blessed.

-Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (London, England: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 69-70