Seeing the World through Jesus-Colored Glasses, Part 3

The idea of "home" is different for each of us, I suppose. For some, home is where they grew up. For others, it's where Mom and Dad live. Still others feel that home is the place they most want to be, wherever that may be. For some, "home" fits all of these categories and for others, only one.

One of Webster's definitions for "home" is: "a social unit formed by a family living together." We understand that a house does not necessarily make a home. The home is made by the family, not the carpenter. In a spiritual sense, we have a home on this earth. Luke's story of the prodigal son shows that there is an earthly home we return to when we repent. In Revelation 12, the woman who is persecuted by the dragon (Satan) is taken to a safe place in the wilderness, and that place is not heaven. In short, the earthly, spiritual home God has given us is the church.

The church is a spiritual unit formed by a family (God's family, 1 Timothy 3:15; Romans 8:16, 17) living together (having fellowship). The church is the home to which prodigal sons and daughters return when they repent. Yes, it's true that Luke says the prodigal son returned to his father (Luke 15), but where was his father? At home! The only safe place in the wilderness of earth for God's people is the church.

Try to picture the church as a group of missionaries leaving America in the late 1800s to do mission work in the jungles of Africa. If you were a part of that group, when you arrived, you would have helped to build the missionary compound, a walled enclosure that would become a Little America. The purpose of the compound would be to provide protection from the environment and to provide some semblance of home. English would be spoken and goods from home would be abundant. But it's not really home and everybody knows it.

The church is a large group of missionaries sent into the jungles of humanity. We're not natives, spiritually speaking (Philippians 3:20). We need to build walls which will protect us from the natives (John 17:15, 16), yet which will not isolate us from our evangelistic responsibility (Matthew 28:19, 20; James 1:27). We need to have as many goods from home as we can (e.g., praising God, loving one another, eating the rich and wonderful food of God's word, etc.). But it's not really home and everybody knows it. Or do we? Physically speaking, missionaries have been home. They remember what it was like and they're homesick. We spiritual missionaries, however, have never been to heaven and we get only a glimpse of it in Scripture. We were born on the mission field (John 3:3-5). And so, we don't get homesick. And we begin to think of this world as home. But it's not!

I hope this series has encouraged you to get homesick for heaven. The fact that we have that hope helps me get through an awful lot of bad stuff. I hope it does the same for you. Have a great week and know that God loves and you and so do I.

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