

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

March 8, 2016

- ✓ Numbers 7:48-89– The leaders’ offerings and seeing the beauty of God.
- ✓ John 15:1-16:4 – The Vine and the Branches: power and love.
- ✓ Psalm 9:1-7 – Wholeheartedness.

REFLECTIONS:

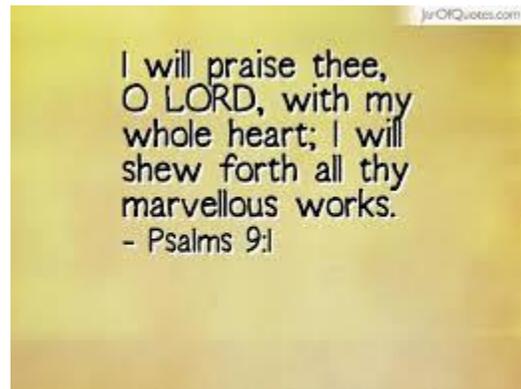
Numbers 7:48-89. This section of God’s Word describes the offerings of the spiritual leaders. Let us reflect on the difference love for God makes in *giving* our lives and all that we have to the Lord. First, let us think about what it means to live as a human being *without* love for God in Total Truth, in the context of *Esse* metaphysics—apart from which one lives like a pragmatic deist. Such a person lives a daily life void of spiritual energy for the things of God. Such a person would give the offerings in this passage without understanding, for such a person does not live by grand truths of God in any area of life. He has no great, that is, wonderfully transcendent ideas—one cannot live by what one does not know. His failure to surrender himself and all that he has to God has closed the door to a transcendent life with God. In short, such a person would give his offerings out of duty rather than out of a thankful loving heart—in a word ‘legalism,’ a legalism from which chains no amount of “grace talk” or power words can really break. In short, he is blind to his God as *Esse*. To him, the world, and so God, is flat, gray, and filled with blandness punctuated with anxiety and misery. Second, now consider the person who loves God with the understanding of Him as *Esse*: *The appearance of everything is altered. There is a new sweetness to all of life. Everything appears with a cast of divine glory: from the existence of my laptop and these words to the grass, trees, insects, and sunshine outside of my hotel room.* Regardless of how exhausted I am from last evening’s grilling at SES, what a wonderful thing it is to exist in God and in the family of God and have before me the option of advancement in God by knowledge and by love, all in the context of the metaphysics of *Esse*—Total Truth. What a privilege it is to exist regardless of where that existence is in a broken, hurtful, and fallen world that still exudes the glory and grace of God (Rom. 1:18-20) for all who will open their eyes to Him. *Quo Vadis?*



John 15:1-16. In verses 9-11 we have the command to abide in love. This is Christ's conclusion to the great figure of the Vine and the branches as it looks back and declares Christ's purpose in His preceding utterances. The key fact of the Vine/branches is that participation in Christ's life is the source of all good, and that abiding in Him means participating in His life. From this He moves into abiding in His love for further explication. Fellowship with Christ brings fruit, this fellowship is by knowledge and by love—not by modern conduit forms of Christianity. In sum, we go from emphasis on the divine side in the Vine to emphasis on the believer's part in the command to abide in His Word. Note the emphasis on love "as the Father loved me, so I have loved you." He assures us that by keeping His commandments, we shall abide in His love. This obedience is far more than outward conformity by action. Rather, it is inward harmony of will and bowing in love to Him with the whole being. The passage clearly indicates that He will love us better the more we obey His commandments. This does not cast doubt on His love in grace when we are disobedient. It only highlights His love, desire, and satisfaction when it shares in a 2nd person *mutual* reciprocal love with His beloved. The world tends to think that believers are weak. This is only true of the believer who does not enjoy a loving union, an abiding with Christ. The believer who lives in, with, and for the Lord has far more power than any person on Earth because he lives transcendentally. Such a person is strong enough to organize his inner life and outer life into a wholeness under the universal goodness of God. What possible transient goodness could really be large enough for any unbeliever to order his entire being, inside and outside, around?



Psalm 9:1-7. In the first verse David praises God with his “whole heart.” David was not a divided man with respect to God, which means he was not divided with regard to the rest of his life. The person who has a divided heart with regard to God lives a fragmented life. Consider the blessings of the undivided person who lives for the Lord in contrast to the divided person who does not live for God and thus has no grand or central Truth to bring order and transcendence to *all* of his life: 1) Large vs. small: with the Lord, a person gains a much wider vision of life than the person who does not live for the Lord and is stuck with a small life that is marked by narrow and selfish interests, 2) Peace vs. angst: the person who wholeheartedly lives before the Lord lives with the peace of a continuity with the Lord’s power and will that stands in stark contrast to the person who lives in angst because he fights against the Lord’s with “no, no, no,” and 3) Love vs. non-giving: by loving God with all of one’s heart, soul, mind, and one’s neighbor as oneself, one’s attitude takes on a new perception that brings a greater capacity for purity, compassion and sensitivity to others that is not possible for one who does not think that loving God or others has any value worth pursuing. In sum, when Christ said the greatest command is to love the Lord with ALL of one’s heart, soul, strength, and mind, He meant it—there is no greater issue and need in each of our lives.



In, by, with, through, and for *Esse*,

Pastor Don