**The Faith of Jesus**

A homily preached by Daniel Love Glazer at Bella Terra Nursing Centre

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Welcome to the third Sunday in Advent! The word advent means arrival, and the season of Advent is the time in the church calendar when Christians anticipate the arrival of Jesus.

Who is this Jesus whom we anticipate? Christianity describes him as The Son of Man and the Son of God. We believe that he combines both human and divine natures in one unified personality. Today I want to focus on the human nature of Jesus.

The human Jesus had a faith in God that was absolute and exultant. Like every mortal creature, he experienced the highs and lows of daily existence, but he never for one moment doubted the certainty of God’s protection and loving care. Jesus’ faith was the result of the activity of the divine spirit working within the ground of his being. His faith was not just an adherence to tradition or acceptance of a dogmatic belief; nor was it simple an intellectual exercise. His faith was completely personal and wholly spiritual.

Jesus saw God as holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful and good. For Jesus, all these divine qualities comprised the “will of the Father in heaven.”

Faith for Jesus was not a means of escape from a world of troubles and conflicts. It was not an illusory consolation for the trials and problems of life, an avoidance of the harsh realities of life. In the face of all life’s tribulations, he enjoyed the thrill of living, by faith, in the very presence of the Heavenly Father. This faith was a triumphant source of personal power and security. As the theologian Wilhelm Bousset has put it, “Never in the life of any one man was God such a living reality as in the life of Jesus.”

Jesus’ faith was rooted in his personal experience with God. Theologians may intellectualize and dogmatize faith, but in the human life of Jesus, faith was personal, original, and spontaneous, like the attitude of a child toward his father. Jesus’ faith in God was not something he held, but rather something that *held* him. His experience of God was so real and so deep that it dissolved all doubts or contrary desires. No disappointment, frustration or distress could shake his all-consuming faith. His faith in God was absolute, totally loyal. Not even a cruel death could dent his faith.

For Jesus, the kingdom of God encompassed all spirit values. He said, “Seek First the kingdom of God.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The heart of the prayer he taught his disciples was, “Your kingdom come, your will be done.” He devoted himself to the realization of the will of God with utter self-forgetfulness and total enthusiasm. Yet he never succumbed to the fury of the fanatic or extremist. His spiritual attitude dominated all of his praying, his preaching, his teaching, his thinking, and feeling.

Even so, when someone came to him with the question, “Good teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Jesus immediately replied, “Why do you call me good? None is good save one, even God.” When we see this incredible self-forgetfulness, it becomes easier to see how God the Father was able so fully to manifest himself to him and reveal himself through him to others. As the theologian Heiler has written, “The greatest of all offerings that the religious man brings to God is the surrender of his own will in complete obedience.” This is just what Jesus did: the consecration and dedication of his own will to the majestic service of doing the divine will.

Walter E. Bundy, in *The Religion of Jesus*, has commented that “[Jesus] interpreted religious living wholly in terms of the divine will.” He points out that Jesus never prayed as a religious duty, but rather as “an expression of need, a release of soul, a relief of inner pressure, an elevation and enrichment of mind, a reinforcement and refreshment of spirt, a clarifying of vision. Bundy goes on to say that “Not in visions and voices, but in prayer and communion with God…Jesus learned the divine will and found the personal power to perform it.”

Jesus proclaimed, “Except you become as a little child, you shall not enter the kingdom.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Here Jesus is not recommending a childish immaturity, but rather the attitude of trust and confidence that a child has in his parental environment. The child has a sense of absolute security, free from skepticism and disturbing doubts. Like such a child, Jesus was assured of the watchcare and guidance of his heavenly Father. Bundy says, “His dependence of the divine yielded a sense of absolute security, a wholesome optimism.”

When Jesus was nailed to the cross, he said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” He could not have so mercifully forgiven his executioners unless his entire life had been dominated by thoughts of love.

Jesus’ great demand is, “Follow me.” He urged his followers not so much to believe **in** him, but rather believe **with** him, to accept the reality of the love of God and confidently feel the assurance of sonship with the Father in heaven. He challenged his followers to believe not only **wha**t he believed, but **as** he believed.

Christians glorify the risen and divine Jesus, and it is right and proper that we do so. But the Master has ascended on high as a man, as well as God. He belongs to men; men belong to him. Let not the discussions of the humanity or divinity of the Christ obscure the saving truth that Jesus of Nazareth was a religious man who, by faith, achieved the knowing and the doing of the will of God.

Thanks be to God!

**Amen!**

1. Matthew 6:33 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Matthew 18:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)