

Pastors Perspective April 2022

The Anthill and Amazing Love

By Pastor Tim White,
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Years ago, I heard a short illustration about a father and son adventuring outside in the woods. Along the way, they came upon an anthill that some animal had savagely wrecked. They could see the ants scurrying in pure panic mode as they attempted to fix something beyond their ability to repair. Immediately, the son felt compassion for these ants and decided he would help them rebuild their hill because he knew that in doing so, he would restore their place of protection and save their lives.

You can imagine what happened next. As the son began to help the ants, they started to attack him. The ants assaulted the son with the same fervor they had in trying to rebuild their devastated home. The very one who was working to do what only he could do for them was now the object of their furious wrath and anger. The boy tried to brush them off and even began telling the ants that he was trying to help them – but not surprisingly, to no avail. They started biting him and getting in his clothes to such an extent that he had to pull back and cease his work of love.

Exasperated and still trying to brush off the remaining angry ants, the son looks up to his father and asks, “Don’t they know I am trying to help them? I care about them, but they think I am their enemy! Father, how can I get them to understand that I can fix their ruined anthill?” The father looked at the mess on the ground and the wild mass of frantic ants, then he looked at his son and said, “I guess you would have to become an ant.”

The son’s efforts were driven by his compassion for the ants who had done nothing to deserve his attention, much less his help. However, his concern for the pitiful state of the ants moved him to reach out to do what they could not. Predictably, he was rejected and then assaulted by the ants because they could not understand his words and misinterpreted his actions.

Similarly, God the Father saw our helpless condition, and did what the boy in this story could not – he sent His One and only Son to earth in human form to save us. His name is Jesus, who lived among us for a time, taught us, healed many, and pointed the way back to God the Father. When He had done all that His Father desired on earth, the Son finished that work by taking the punishment for our sin upon Himself when He shed his blood and died on a cruel cross. Three days later He conquered death by physically rising from the dead so that we too can have life eternal through Him who is Christ.

The Apostle John wrote, “This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sin” (1 John 4:10). We have done nothing to deserve the attention and love of the Creator of all things – and yet, He loves each one of us. Similar to the ants’ reaction to the son’s help, many who were the object of Christ’s love were the same ones who cried out, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”

I marvel at the thought that God loved me first, even when I did not believe in Him or care about Him. While I was busy breaking His commands and rejecting His offer of mercy and forgiveness, He was still directing His love toward me. The reality is that God the Father could not leave us in our spiritually ruined state. So, He “reconciled the world (back) to Himself not counting people’s sin against them” through Christ’s death which paid the penalty for our sins against God’s holy law (2 Cor. 5:19). God’s mercy and love is personified through Jesus Christ.

So now “the ball is in our court.” When I was 14 years old, I realized that I needed Christ to forgive me, and when I confessed that need and called out to Him, He heard me and wiped away the record of my sin. There is no longer any “condemnation” for all who have done so because Christ has set us free (Rom. 8:1-2). Easter is about forgiveness, mercy, love, freedom from penalty for sin, and life eternal.

What effect does the thought have on you that even today, the almighty God who created all that exists is still directing His love toward you? The message of Easter is this: The work Christ accomplished through His death and resurrection means that no matter how greatly you have sinned, you can be forgiven completely when you put your trust in Him. Someone said that no matter how deep sin takes you, God’s love and mercy go deeper still.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but receive eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him” John 3:16-17. “Amazing love! How can it be? That Thou, my God, should die for me!” (Charles Wesley, 1738). Fifty years later, I am still amazed!