

From the January 7, 2008 Issue

## ***The Word of Grace Revisited***

In our Special Issue back in August of 2007 we printed an excerpt from Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* in which he imagines a dialogue between the Word of grace and the word of man. (You can check it out in the newsletter archive on the website at [www.theadoptedlife.org](http://www.theadoptedlife.org). Go to page 7 of the Special Issue.)

Pastor Tim has revisited this excellent description of grace and paraphrased it into modern English. Here it is:

Let's imagine God talking to a person about the Good News of who they already are in Jesus. The person to whom it is said thinks God is crazy and says that they are not this new, peaceful, joyful person living in fellowship with Him. The person is convinced there is no such person and, if there is, it certainly isn't them (because they supposedly know themselves better than God does.)

*The Word of grace replies:* "I can appreciate your honesty, but you are embracing a lie and I am telling you the truth. Allow me to tell you the truth about yourself. After all, I created you and know way more than you do. In fact, I know everything! The truth is, you are the peaceful, joyful person I created you to be, even though you think otherwise."

*Person:* "I know that it is your goal for me to become that kind of person over time. But I have low self-esteem, and absolutely no confidence in myself (I get this from my grandmother on my dad's side you know.) These things pretty much confirm that I shall never become the person you speak of. 'The proof is in the pudding' as they say!"

*The Word of grace:* "You are wise not to have confidence in yourself or in your family genetics, because those weaknesses are causing you to miss my point! I am NOT asking you to set a goal of becoming the person I want you to be. Not in the least! Impossible! What I am telling you is that, as I know you, you already ARE that person!"

*Person:* "Now I get it! You are a positive and optimistic thinker, and you are positively hoping that one day (perhaps a million light years from now) a miracle will occur and I might accidentally become that person by some freak of nature accident, right?! I've often wondered about that myself! Can you imagine the 'smoke and mirror' trick it would take to pull off making me appear to be that kind of person? Ha! What a joke! Not even a fool could dream up something that crazy! And even if it did happen, I'm sure I would wake up a minute after I believed it and discover the truth of my pitiful and nightmarish REAL life once again!"

*The Word of grace:* "Wow! You sure are in the dark about my Light within you! Well, no worries! I will always love you and like you! In fact, I am always with you. I will never leave or forsake you, and I will keep doing everything possible to help you see me and yourself more clearly! We've got eternal time ahead of us, don't we? Ha! The first thing I want you to understand is that I am not inviting you to speculate about who you are or will be!! I want you to receive and believe the Good News that right HERE, and right NOW, you have begun to be the new person! You are ALREADY that which you will be eternally."

*Person:* “Do you think I was just born yesterday?! How can I even begin to accept such ridiculously Good News? Since you “know” everything about me then surely you ‘know’ I am from the ‘Show me’ state! Don’t just talk to me about it! Show me proof! Why should I listen to you and take you seriously?!”

*The Word of grace:* “You should take me seriously because, I, Jesus Christ, am the One who speaks to you! You are who and what you are in Me, just as I created and desired you to be! I have adopted you into the relationship I share with the Father in the Spirit as we planned it before the foundation of the world! I want you to believe that I am holding fast to you, so that you can experience holding fast to Me! I am your guarantee. My life is yours! When I lived as a human, you truly lived as a human! When I died, you died! When I rose and ascended to the Father and Spirit as a Man, you rose with me! You will always be with me wherever I am! My boldness is yours. With this boldness dare to be who and what you know you are deep in your soul (where I am shouting endlessly!)”

*Person:* “Whatever! I hear what you are trying to say, BUT . . .”

In this perplexed and startled “BUT...” we see that humanity is suffering an ungodly attack, and this attack explains our struggle to receive the Truth about ourselves as Truth!

*Tim Brassell* re-translating: Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics, Volume IV, The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, Part Three, First Half. Eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance. Published by T. and T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1961. p. 250.