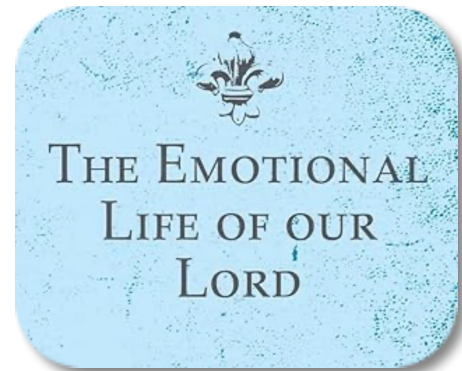


The Emotional Life of Our Lord

(a summary by Pat Evert)

There is a tendency in the interest of the dignity of his person to minimize, and there is a tendency in the interest of the completeness of his humanity to magnify, his effectual movements.

1 – His compassion. This is the emotion that is most commonly attributed to him. This essential perfection in God, whereby he pities and relieves the miseries of his creatures. Many with spiritual destitution was what most deeply moved him with pity. Love is attributed to Jesus only once in the Synoptics, but compassion often – while with John the opposite is true, compassion is attributed to Jesus not even once, but love often. His love to God is that of pure complacency. And because he loved the Father, His will He will do. Of all the good that can come to human beings, including as the highest reach of social perfection, their love for one another. It is those that do the things He commands, who are His friends. His friends are those that are loved, rather than those who love.



2 – The emotions of indignation and anger. It would be impossible, for a moral being to stand in the presence of perceived wrong indifferent and unmoved. The insensibility of the Jews to human suffering exhibited in the tendency to put ritual integrity above humanity filled Jesus with indignant anger. The spectacle of their hardness of heart produced in him the deepest dissatisfaction, which passed into angry resentment. Anger always has pain at its root. It is a reaction of the soul against what gives it discomfort.

Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus, not in the state of uncontrolled grief, but irrepressible anger. John gives us to understand that the external expression of our Lord's fury was markedly restrained: its manifestation fell far short of its real intensity. Jesus was enraged because it brought poignantly home to his consciousness the evil of death, its unnaturalness, its violent tyranny; the general misery of the whole human race, and he burned with rage against the oppressor of man. It is death that is the object of his wrath and behind death him who has the power of death, and whom he has come into the world to destroy. Tears of sympathy may fill his eyes, but this is incidental. His soul is held by rage: and advances to the tomb as a champion who prepares for conflict. In flaming wrath Jesus goes against the foe. He has felt our oppression and under such a weight he has secured our salvation.

Also, in the cleansing of the temple his indignant anger towards those who defile God's house with trafficking demonstrates Jesus' anger in action. He had strong words for his

enemies, “that Fox, swine, hypocrites, blind guides, whitened sepulchers, faithless and perverse generation, ravening wolves, serpents, even children of the evil one. “And as for these my enemies, bring them here and slay them before me”. True mercy is no less the product of anger than of pity. Therefore the anger of Christ, which proved that the unbounded compassion he manifested to sinners was really mercy and not merely tolerance. Jesus burned with anger, at the wrongs he met with in his journey through human life, as truly as He melted with pity at the site of the world’s misery.

3 – His joy and sorrow. His advent into the world was announced as good tidings of great joy. Such operation of the Holy Spirit whom we must suppose to have been always working in the soul of Christ. Never did so much joy fill the heart of man. If our Lord was the ‘man of sorrows’, He was more profoundly still, the ‘man of joy’. This was in submission to, or rather a hearty embracing of His Father’s will.

His whole being revolted at the final and deepest humiliation in which the powers of evil were to inflict upon Him the precise penalty of human sin. To bow His head beneath this stroke was the last indignity, the hardest act of that obedience which it was His to render in His servant form. Matthew and Mark both record, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death’. Then Luke reveals ‘sweat dropping like clots of blood’. The horror of death and the ardor of obedience met. In Gethsemane the end would then have come, but the cup must need be drained to its dregs, so an angelic visitor comes to give him supernatural strengthening. But no where is he the victim of circumstances or the helpless sufferer. Everywhere and always, it is He who processes the mastery, both of circumstances and of Himself. But we are given, no doubt, only the highlights of such joys and sorrows. Nothing that is human was alien to Him, and all that is human manifested itself in Him in perfect proportion and balance.

Varied as they are they do not inhibit one another, compassion and indignation rise together in His soul, joy and sorrow meet in His heart and kiss each other. Strong as they are – not mere joy but exultation, not mere irritated annoyance but raging indignation, not mere passing pity but the deepest movements of compassion and love, not mere surface distress but an exceeding sorrow even unto death – they never overmaster Him. He remains ever in control. And we are not to be content to gaze upon Him or to admire Him, we must become imitators of Him, until we are metamorphosed into the same image. When we observe Him exhibiting the movements of His human emotions, we are gazing on the very process of our salvation. Among the emotions our Lord experiences, there are those that belong to Him as man, and there are those that belong to Him as sin-bearer, which never would have invaded His soul in the purity of His humanity, except as He stood under the curse incurred for His people’s sins. The cup that He drank to its bitter dregs was not His cup but ours, and He needed to drink it only because He was set upon our salvation.