

# Ash Plumes and the Sovereignty of God

Sunday, April 18, 2010 – This is not a story with a happy ending, because the story hasn't ended yet. Ray Bohlin, Todd Kappelman and I, along with millions of other travelers stranded around the globe, are in Frankfurt, Germany far longer than the eighteen hours we expected to be here on our way home from Minsk, Belarus.



For two weeks, we were privileged to share some of Probe's worldview and apologetics material with young adult believers and future church leaders in Belarus. This country was part of the former Soviet Union, located between Poland and Russia. Until

"freedom came" (their term) in 1991 with the fall of the USSR, it labored under the oppression of communism. The spiritual darkness of this country is part of the oppression as well. One of Ray's spiritual gifts is discernment, and he feels the weight of oppression and darkness from the moment we get off the plane. Even though God has blessed me with a sunny disposition, the unending ugly gray, featureless, monstrously huge apartment buildings thrown up by the government to house millions of citizens as if they were animals, depresses my spirit as well.

But it was a good, rich time with our friends in Belarus; they appreciated our teaching styles, the (very different!) material we presented, and the way we loved them. The warm reception from those we spent time with last year was encouraging to us, as were the tears at the farewell ceremony from this year's new friends. We have been invited back with

opportunities to expand our ministry there, and we look forward to returning next year.

Belarus is not kind to people with disabilities. As one now living in the throes of post-polio syndrome (muscle weakness, fatigue and pain), the ubiquitous stairs make getting around more difficult than I am used to in the U.S., especially since many of my supporters and friends gave generously to allow me to buy a mobility scooter. Neither a scooter nor a wheelchair are of any use in a country with lots of stairs but not elevators or usable ramps, so we don't bring them to Belarus.

Our time with Belarusian believers was wonderful, but we gladly flew to Frankfurt, where we were grateful for simple things that are easy to take for granted, like absorbable and flushable toilet paper, and safe tap water. Before leaving Minsk we learned about the volcanic eruption in Iceland, but it was too far away to have any impact on our flight. We checked our bags all the way through to DFW from Minsk, since we only had a one-night stay in Frankfurt. My small sack with nightwear and a change of clothing was inadvertently stuck in one of the checked bags instead of a carry-on, but I shrugged it off since it was only one night.

That's what we thought.

The Frankfurt airport was closed to air traffic at 8 a.m. Although the lines to rebook flights were impossibly long, Lufthansa (my new favorite airline) designates an office and waiting area for special needs passengers, especially those with handicaps. They got us confirmed seats on the next day's flight, and Lufthansa gave us vouchers for hotel rooms and that night's dinner in the hotel restaurant. Since the rooms would not be available till after 2 p.m., we enjoyed a leisurely lunch in the airport. There were so many people it reminded me of being at Disneyland on New Year's Day.

A shuttle took us and a bus full of other passengers to the

hotel, ten minutes from the airport. And here we stay, so grateful to have been provided a bed to sleep in and three meals a day when thousands of people are stuck at the airport because their airline does not cover these needs, or their visa does not allow them to leave the transit zone.

As the world now knows, the ash plume continues to push its way into Northern Europe, at the same high altitude as the jets fly, where they can suck in small, jagged pieces of volcanic rock and glass that also conduct electricity and cause total engine failure. No one knows when it will be safe to fly again. No one knows when we will get to our destinations. And there is no one to get angry with, no one to blame, no one to sue.

Processing this experience through the grid of a biblical worldview colors the way we think about our "adventure."

We know that God is in control of volcanoes, and eruptions, and winds, and the timing of it all. He is in control of the world's flight systems. He is in control of our schedules. He knew when He allowed us to be stranded in Germany that Todd had classes to teach at Dallas Baptist University, that Ray had a number of events and meetings scheduled in his role as president of Probe, that I had several Christian Women's Club luncheons to speak at in New Mexico this week. And He allowed us to be stranded in far-easier Germany, not in Belarus; twenty-four hours later, and our flight out of Minsk would have been cancelled. He provided food and shelter for us. He has given grace for Ray and me to have our laptops with us with easy internet access from our room, and He helped me find and disable the virus that infected Ray's computer last week.

We don't know how long we will be here, or when we'll see our luggage again. We DO know that God is good, and the fact that we have been blessed with so much favor doesn't mean that He loves the people stuck inside security at the airport any less. Or that any of us did anything wrong to have Him punish

us.

And we are aware that the more the world grows flat and interconnected, the greater the fragility of the systems. So much of our comforts and our technology relies on everything continuing to run smoothly without interruption. It is good for us as human beings to be reminded that we are *not* the masters of our fate or the captains of our souls, as the obnoxiously humanistic poem *Invictus* declares. God is bigger and more powerful than we are; a nature that has been impacted by the Fall, producing things like the disruptions from volcanic eruptions, is bigger and more powerful than we are. We are tiny and insignificant in the face of something like Iceland's exploding mountain; and yet, God still counts the hairs on our head and is still Immanuel, God with us, whether in an "adventure," or a disaster, or the blessedly uneventful days of blessedly uneventful routine.

The bottom line: God is still good. He is still loving. He is still sovereign.

And we rest, as trustful children, in these wonderful truths. All the way to the end of the story, however it ends.

*Addendum: April 20, 2010*

It *is* a happy ending!

Late yesterday afternoon, Lufthansa summoned their international passengers to the airport because they were going to let a handful of flights depart. One of them was to the U.S., and Ray said, "It doesn't matter what city it is, if it's on American soil. We can always get to Dallas, if we can just get out of Germany!" Although this flight to Chicago was fully booked, not all the passengers made it to the airport, and all three of us were given seats. We arrived in Chicago at midnight, and to our amazement, all our bags were on that flight. Since they were tagged for Dallas/Ft. Worth and there was only a small window of time from when we received our

boarding passes, we were amazed and delighted to see them.

We were able to get some of the last seats on a 6 a.m. flight to Dallas, and a few hours later we were back at home, grateful, blessed and tired.

And ready for a shower and a change of clothes!

© 2010 Probe Ministries

---

## **“Is There a Demonic Spirit of Homosexuality?”**

**Could people who honestly believe they are gay, possibly be blinded by a demonic spirit of homosexuality? Or could they possibly have a demon of homosexuality in them? I am not saying all are demon possessed, but what is it that makes them truly, honestly believe that they are born this way?**

Having studied both spiritual warfare and the contributing factors to homosexuality, I do not think that a demonic spirit of homosexuality is the definitive explanation for believing one is gay. Yes, deception is an important component to a homosexual orientation; those who experience same-sex attraction unwittingly believe a number of lies about life, about themselves, about others, and often about God. And where sin and deception are, there is often a demonic presence or element.

In those who feel “different” from childhood, homosexuality comes from emotional and spiritual brokenness. There is a constellation of contributing factors to this brokenness: hurtful relationships with parents and peers, unmet emotional needs, emotional traumas due to abuse, wrong perceptions,

warped gender identity. I believe that the enemy of our souls exploits this brokenness and whispers lies to broken people that are very easy to believe because they don't know they're lies. (Lies such as, "You make a lousy boy [or girl]." "You're not like everybody else." "Nobody will accept you." "If you were a better boy/girl, your father/mother would love you more." "The way to get love is through sex." "God made you gay." "You may not like being like this, but you can't change." "You don't deserve anything better.") So in this way, there is probably a demonic element to the development of homosexuality.

In regard to those who experienced a normal heterosexual childhood: some people are so addicted to indulging their flesh that they turn to homosexual behavior in adulthood. In this case, sin grows up from within the darkened human heart, as described in James 1:14-15: "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." There's probably some demonic influence involved in this process as well.

Is there an actual demonic spirit of homosexuality? Probably so. I have heard a few (a very few, and I've been involved in homosexual ministry for 10 years) testimonies of people who experienced something like a net of same-sex lust being dropped on them, or out-of-the-blue, overwhelming homosexual desires coming upon them like a car wreck. I have also heard from people who report having experienced a spirit of sexual "strangeness" ever since early childhood. In those cases, eventually they recognized the demonic aspect and stood against it. Sometimes, people can dabble in homosexual behavior, and this sin opens the door to demonic oppression. Only repentance, renouncing the door-opening in Jesus' name, and trusting in Christ, makes the demons leave.

But on the other hand, many gay-identifying individuals have pursued deliverance ministry, seeking to have "the demon of

homosexuality” cast of out them—and it didn’t make any difference in their feelings or thoughts, because that wasn’t the cause of their same-gender attraction in the first place. They were seeking an easy fix to a complex problem, but if it’s not the cause of the problem, it won’t work. Romans 12:2 directs us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, which means changing our beliefs and thoughts (which can result in a change of feeling), but this is the work of discipline. Again, no easy fix.

You ask why people honestly believe they are born homosexual. Well, for the same reason you could honestly believe you were born an English speaker. You’ve always spoken English, it’s all you’ve ever known, it’s the most natural thing in the world for you. The reality is that you, like all humans, were born a LANGUAGE speaker, but being an English speaker was shaped by thousands of interactions with your family and your culture. Homosexuals are shaped in similar ways that started at birth. All people are born to be relational, but some people are relationally broken because of thousands of interactions that are a result of living in a fallen world with fallen people. And different people express relational brokenness in different ways. I think of families where one sibling is gay and another deals with chronic rage or depression. Different kinds of brokenness, depending on the personality and perceptions of the individuals.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

© 2003 Probe Ministries, revised 03/10

---

# **“We Need Encouragement After Repeated Miscarriages”**

Recently, my wife and I suffered our third miscarriage in a little over a year. I am feeling so many emotions right now from anger and frustration to confusion. We have no kids currently, but would like to one day. I am having trouble reconciling these miscarriages and was hoping for some encouragement I guess. Where can I look in the Bible for something that helps?

My hurt aches for you and your wife. I am so very, very sorry for the tsunami of pain and disappointment and grief you and she are experiencing. My husband and I are also in the “Parents Who Have Lost Babies” club. Burying our daughter after nine days of life was devastating to us, but God has greatly redeemed every bit of the pain in the years since then.

I think the encouragement you seek will come from being able to see the bigger picture, one that includes God’s tender love for you and His tears for your pain as He works out His purposes in your life and character. May I suggest a couple of resources that may help? My Probe article “The Value of Suffering” is intensely practical in terms of understanding a biblical view of pain and suffering: [The Value of Suffering](#)

At our last Probe Mind Games conference, where we equip students to be confident in their faith before they get to college, I recorded my teaching session on this subject, which I sensed was very much anointed by God. I pray you find it helpful and comforting: [www.box.net/shared/66gn28bubc](http://www.box.net/shared/66gn28bubc) (It opens with the sound track to the video I show first, Rob Bell’s NOOMA video “Rain.”)

You may also find [Caleb Ministries](#) helpful; they help people



who are in exactly your position.

I send this with the prayer that you and your wife experience the warmth of God's comfort wrapped around your soul like a warm blanket on a cold and rainy day.

Again, I am so sorry for your losses.

Sue Bohlin

© 2010 Probe Ministries

---

## **“What’s the Difference Between a Prophet and a Clairvoyant?”**

How can I show my friend biblically that clairvoyance, tarot cards, and such are wrong? She seems to think that there is no difference in a prophet and clairvoyant (psychic reading), seeing as they both can predict the future. Can you help me explain the differences?

You might try to get your friend to understand the importance of making distinctions between prophecy and clairvoyance by pointing out the difference between poisonous mushrooms and safe mushrooms: they can both be eaten, but one kind will kill you! Those who claim to be clairvoyant are either fraudulent, making things up as they read the body-language responses of their customers, or they are being fed information from demons. [For an example of a fraudulent psychic, see our answer to email [“What About Crossing Over’s John Edward?”](#)] And Jesus told us that demons lie (“[W]hen he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John

8:44).

The biblical standard of a prophet of God is 100% accuracy. This is because the information about future events is coming from God Himself, and He is powerful enough to overcome the limitation of speaking through a fallen, fallible human being. That is a long way from the fuzzy “information” from self-proclaimed psychics and clairvoyants! If anyone is receiving their “power” or information from anyone except God, which would be demonstrated by 100% accuracy in their predictions (and, I would suggest, the mark of Christlikeness in their character and life), it is coming from the dark side—the Evil One. There is no such thing as morally neutral supernatural information or power.

It is a dangerous thing to play around with the occult, as many can testify that this is how they opened the doors to demon oppression in their lives.

We have several articles you may find helpful in showing your friend God’s warnings to stay away from the occult:

[“What’s a Biblical Description of Witchcraft?”](#)

[The World of the Occult](#)

[The Occult Connection](#)

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2010 Probe Ministries

**See Also:**

- [“Is Clairvoyance Wrong?”](#)

---

# **“My Beseating Sin Makes Me Doubt My Salvation”**

I am almost 70 years old and undoubtedly nearing “the end of the road.” I came to faith in Jesus Christ over thirty years ago but have consistently been plagued by a “beseating sin” that I seem not to be able to have consiseant victory over. I fall, confess, repent, and have “victory” for awhile, and then fall again. This continual struggle has led me to sometimes doubt my salvation, and I am troubled that perhaps the Lord has grown weary of my shallow commitment and has given up on me. What can I do?? I have recently been diagnosed with prostate cancer and I am in terror of dying and finding myself in hell. Please help!

I am so glad you wrote! You are not alone. I think this secret fear plagues millions of Christ-followers. And I also think that the core of this fear is not knowing how huge is His love for us, and His deep understanding of our broken humanity (Ps. 103:14—“For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.”).

Our flesh, the part of us that operates independently from God and in our own strength, is hopelessly corrupted and unredeemable. But even though we can operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, in dependence on Christ, the same way that we can fly in an airplane that is dependent on the laws of aerodynamics to get and stay off the ground, eventually we return to our default position of fleshliness.

God knows this, and He understands it! And He loves us anyway. Consider the strong encouragement from Romans 8. The chapter opens with the astonishing statement that is a sure shame-killer: “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who

are in Christ Jesus.” NO condemnation! The Lord has not “grown weary of your shallow commitment,” brother. He understands your weakness and looks forward to the time when you are no longer fettered by the flesh that pulls you down like spiritual gravity.

But then consider the end of the chapter:

*33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*

The Lord Jesus died for you and, far from condemning you, intercedes for you this very day!

*35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

Nothing can separate us from Jesus' love. Nothing has the power to keep Him from loving us, and nothing has the power to keep us from being loved!

*36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

God has pronounced you a conquerer through Christ, and is working to transform you into who He says you are. Even on the days when it doesn't much feel like it. He is still at work!

*38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of*

*God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Nothing, nothing, nothing! Including our sin. Including our brokenness. Including our weak humanity.

And including besetting sins, which He allows us to struggle with so that we will turn to Him in dependence and trust. Recently I was blessed to attend a banquet for a ministry that helps people deal with unwanted same-sex attraction. The star of the evening was Jesus, who showed up in testimony after testimony of changed lives. Every person who spoke, uncoached except by the Holy Spirit, said in one way or another that they are now at the point where they can see that their struggle is a blessing because it forces them to depend on Christ with a desperation they never would have known otherwise. And that dependence on Christ has taken them to a place of intimacy with the Living Lord they didn't know was possible.

God is honored in our struggles, even when we slip and fall but continue to repent and get up again. It's all about teaching us to enter more deeply into relationship with Him, a relationship of love and friendship and affection and appreciation. I hope I have begun to reframe your struggle in a way that enables you to go to Him for help rather than hiding from the only One who has the power to help you stand against your flesh.

The Lord bless you and keep you today!

Sue Bohlin

© 2010 Probe Ministries

---

# Page Not Found – So Sorry!

For some reason, our search function is returning this “Page Not Found” page the first time. Please submit your search term(s) again and it will probably come up just fine!



Something went wrong with the link to the page you really want. (Still working out the kinks from our Extreme [website] Makeover.) We're so sorry!

[Home Page](#)



[Site Map](#)



Probe Web Team

---

## Black Friday and Dark Hearts

“Black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving in the U.S., is

called that because it usually allows retailers to go into the black. But this year, the early morning shopping frenzy turned deadly. A Walmart employee was trampled to death by New York shoppers who broke down the door before dawn, anxious to get into the store and get their hands on the sale merchandise.

The next day, the *Dallas Morning News* carried a short story providing analysis of why shoppers turned into killers.

- \* Fear of being unable to afford gifts drives shoppers to shop competitively
- \* The urge to snap up discounts can cause people to abandon their normal behavior
- \* When people are jostled in a crowd, their personal space is shattered, resulting in loss of individual judgment
- \* Individual identity can become erased, and one becomes part of the crowd
- \* People's frustration at things like linecutting and being denied access to a big sale flares into rage

Interesting suggestions, these psychological profiles. But something's missing.

Sin. And the nasty ugliness of unfettered flesh.

God has His own explanation:

Where do the conflicts and where do the quarrels among you come from? Is it not from this, from your passions that battle inside you? You desire and you do not have; you murder and envy and you cannot obtain; you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask; you ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly, so you can spend it on your passions. (James 4:1-3)

And perhaps the scariest part of that horrendous killer

stampede at the Walmart is that every single one of us is equipped with the same nasty, ugly, unredeemable flesh. But for the grace of God, those shoppers could have been us.

Could have been me.

Which is why we all need a Savior.

This blog post originally appeared at  
[blogs.bible.org/engage/sue\\_bohlin/black\\_friday\\_and\\_dark\\_hearts](https://blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/black_friday_and_dark_hearts)  
on December 2, 2009

---

## Science and Faith Conference



**Are science and faith at war? Does science undermine or corroborate belief in God? Does faith suppress or inspire scientific research?** Explore these questions and more at this two-day conference held at the Riley Conference Center on the campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Featured speakers include Dr. William Dembski, author of *The Design Revolution* and other books; Dr. Stephen Meyer, author of *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*; Dr. Jay Richards, co-author of *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed For Discovery*; and Dr. John West, author of *Darwin Day in America: How Our Politics and Culture Have Been Dehumanized in the Name of Science*.

Sessions will explore a Biblical theology of nature; the role of Christianity in the founding of modern science; the impact



of Darwinian Evolution on ethics, society, Biblical studies and theology; and the scientific evidence for intelligent design and its implications for theism.

This conference will be of special interest to seminary students, college students, and pastors and other church leaders. At the end of the conference there will be breakout sessions for students, pastors, and church leaders on how to incorporate science and faith issues into one's church, ministry, or career.

*Probe president Dr. Ray Bohlin, a Fellow of the Discovery Institute, is one of the speakers.*

For more information and to register, visit the [ScienceandGod.org](http://ScienceandGod.org) website.

---

## **“I Need Help Resolving Past Stuff In My Life”**

**I need help resolving past stuff in my life. I'm stuck and I don't know where to go or what to. Can you help?**

I can tell you that from my study over the years, as well as personal experience, I believe the key to emotional healing (which is what resolving past stuff is about) is a two-pronged effort: grieving and forgiving. That said, the overarching, “big picture goal” is what David realized in Psalm 51:6 when He told the Lord, “I know that You desire truth in my inmost parts.” God brings freedom and healing when we allow Him to show us the lies we have believed about what we've experienced and the conclusions we have come to about Him, about life, about other people and about ourselves. When we renounce the

lies and embrace the truth, we actually experience Jesus' promise in John 8:32, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." But it needs to be more than an intellectual assent to the truth; we also need to open our hearts to the freeing power of truth.

It's important to face our losses and our woundings, inviting Jesus into the process (absolutely essential), so that we give Him access to those places in our hearts that need healing. In fact, one of my mentors calls Christian denial "the refusal to give God access to the hurts He wants to heal for His glory and our benefit." Instead of going digging, it's much better to ask the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Counselor, to shine His light on which wounds and losses He wants to address, since He knows the best order for untangling our messes. As He brings memories to the surface, we ask for grace in facing them, experiencing the feelings again but this time in a redemptive way because we are giving them to God to heal, and grieving the ungrieved feelings we haven't yet dealt with. This means tears, and sometimes screams. (The best definition I've ever heard of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the emotional debilitation that can follow an emotional trauma such as sexual abuse, or war, or observing something horrific like the workers who cleaned up the aftermath of 9/11, is "failure to scream.") Journaling is one of the most important tools in grieving because there is something therapeutic about the layers of sensory experience in writing on paper: holding the pen, feeling the paper, smelling the ink and the paper, hearing the sounds of pen on paper. And somehow, the Holy Spirit seems to be able to direct our thoughts and our feelings in the process of writing out what's in our hearts, and He dislodges the shards and splinters of lies that are embedded in our souls so that we can recognize them, renounce them, and embrace the truth He shows us.

One of the things God has shown me about grieving is that there is a finite amount of grief for each wound and loss. He

knows how many tears are attached to each wound, and once they're out of us, they are gone forever, collected by God Himself in His tear-bottle (Ps. 56:8). (Consider this: if you think about a childhood loss or painful experience that caused tears, have you cried about it lately? Probably not, because you finished grieving it years ago. There were a finite number of tears over losing a beloved pet in fourth grade, for example. And also consider that since there will be no sorrow or crying or pain in heaven for the believer (Rev. 21:4), all our grieving has a time limit.

The other part of healing is forgiving, where we face the wrongs done to us and choose to let go of them into God's hands for Him to deal with. There are good resources on understanding forgiveness and how to forgive (two of the best are *Total Forgiveness* by R.T Kendall and *I Should Forgive, But...* by Chuck Lynch), but bottom line, we forgive because the only one we hurt by refusing to forgive is ourselves. It's like someone tosses us a hot potato, and we clutch it to our chest exclaiming with pain, all the while continuing to hold it to ourselves. Forgiving means letting go of the hot potato so it no longer hurts us. When we forgive the people who caused us pain, we release them into God's hands for HIM to deal with them as He sees fit. Louis Smedes said that when we forgive someone, we set a prisoner free, and we discover that the prisoner was us.

Refusing to forgive has terrible repercussions. Unforgiveness is a bitter, corrosive poison that consumes a person's soul and diminishes their spirit. I watched a family member grow increasingly invalid and weak with the years of holding onto grudges and insults, whether real or perceived, as if they were treasures. By the time she died, all of her life and vitality was drained out, and there was nothing but a brittle shell of who she used to be. But failing to grieve also has painful consequences: uncried tears heighten stress and cause all kinds of physical diseases and maladies. Because we are a

unit of body, soul and spirit, our bodies hold onto soulish pain and it comes out as physical pain and illness. This is why James 5 “connects the dots” between physical illness, confession of sins, and the need for prayer.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2009 Probe Ministries

---

## **“Isn’t It Egotistical of God to Command Our Worship and Praise?’**

Hi there! Someone once raised this objection that really bugs me... They asked whether it isn’t vain or egotistical of God to command our worship and praise and be so passionate about His own glory. While I certainly don’t agree that God could be vain or egotistical, I’m at a loss for how to respond to this objection. I can understand why some people read verses like these and conclude that God is tooting His own horn:

For my own name’s sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you. *Isaiah 48:9*

I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” *Isaiah 43:6-7*

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let

**myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.**  
***Isaiah 48:11***

**How would you respond to this objection to the Christian faith?**

What a great question! I meditated on it for a couple of weeks.

God wants us to relate rightly to Him. Because He is so immense, so powerful, so sovereign, so righteous, so holy, so pure, so right, so good, so loving, so kind, so just, and most importantly, so *glorious*, relating rightly to Him means responding in awe, in fear, in love, in attraction, in worship, and in praise.

His commands are His loving gifts to us because He created and designed life to work the way it does, and His commands align with His design. The Ten Commandments are powerful because that's the way He created life to function, and we are blessed when we obey. We have trouble when we disobey. His command to praise and worship him is no different because He knows that He is the only source of life. Being rightly related to God is the only way to enter into life, to get our empty souls filled up. Being rightly related to Him means humbly accepting our position as creatures, and affirming that He is God and we are not. It means praising, worshipping and glorifying Him and, as the Westminster Catechism starts out, "enjoying Him forever."

God is not a limited, finite creature for whom it would indeed be prideful and arrogant to say, "Worship and praise me." There is no sinful pride in His invitation to be rightly related to Him, to invite us to enjoy and partake in His glory.

We don't look at the sun and say, "How arrogant of it to shine so brightly, to relentlessly give off heat and light that makes life possible on the earth." It's the nature of gargantuan balls of burning gas to do these things. Our

response to the sun is one of respect, gratitude and fear: we can't even look directly at it for more than a glance or it damages our eyes.

It's not arrogant or prideful for God to shine with a radiance beyond a million suns. That's what glory does: it radiates. It shines. That's how He is, that's who He is.

The God who created the billions of galaxies can pinch the entire universe between two fingers like a toddler picking up a Cheerio. This same God, who keeps the galaxies in motion just as He holds the atoms of physical matter together, not only revealed Himself through His prophets, He actually became one of us, then died in our place and came back to life just as He said He would.

The only response to that kind of God that makes any sense is to fall down at His feet and worship Him.

Thanks for writing!

Sue Bohlin

\* \* \*

After reading this article from my Facebook, a friend sent me a link to a short essay on this subject he thought I'd enjoy. I did, and I'm posting it here because I bet you'll enjoy like it too! [C.S. Lewis' Most Important Discovery](#)

© 2009 Probe Ministries