

Paraklēsis: Partnership

I was at a soccer practice recently and I was talking to some parents that I hadn't met before. As usual, I asked, "so what do you do?" And the woman replied, "I'm human resources manager." At that point her daughter who was probably eight or nine looked up and asked, "Mommy what's a human resources manager?" The mom replied to her and explained how she manages people, makes sure that their abilities are well used in the organization, resolves and manages conflicts between the employees, selects people to hire for jobs that need to be done, and generally deals with the employees in the company. The little girl took a few seconds to process that and then responded, "**Isn't that just like just like what God does?**"

Yes, God is the ultimate human resources manager!

We are human, and certainly God is our manager. Does it seem odd to consider ourselves a resource for God? **Does the Creator of the universe need any resource other than His command**, His voice, to get anything done?

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Genesis 1:3)

But, we are His resources. He's got a job to do here, and we are the tools for Him to get that job done.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. (John 14:12)

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (Ephesians 4:11-12)

No surprise to us, He want to use us to get that job done. We are to be His willful, cheerful, diligent servants.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men (Colossians 3:23)

But that's not the only relationship that we have with God, as you well know. He's our father, he's our creator, he's our provider, he's our healer, he's our strength, he is our protection, on and on and on. But I think there's another relationship that we overlook sometimes. This is not my idea - I got this idea watching a video from **The Bible Project**. God has entered into a covenant with us. By definition, that covenant relationship is a partnership. Partnership, as we might understand it, means that both parties are on equal standing. Obviously, this is not the case here. The partnership that we are in with God is an unequal partnership – He, being superior to us. However, if we define a partnership as an agreement where both parties have a common goal and work together to achieve that goal, I think the analogy fits.

In 1st Kings, we read about Elijah, a prophet, who God chose as a partner to accomplish His goal. In chapter 18, God needed to deliver a message to the people and he partnered with Elijah to make that possible. In verse 1 God says to Elijah, "You go show yourself to Ahab, and I will make it rain." God also needed to convince the priests of Baal that God was sovereign and alone as the Creator. God did not need Elijah to prove that to the priests of Baal. Surely God could have thought of something to do to convince them! But **He partnered with Elijah** to make the message clear.

At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word.(1 Kings 18:36)

Elijah's servant went seven times to the cliff to look for the cloud before the rain actually came. The servants drenched the wood and sacrifice with twelve pots of water before God sent fire to ignite it. These are tasks that God's partner needed to complete before God could show the results of his promises. **God knows his audience better than anyone** and he knew what his audience needed to see before they would believe.

When God enters into a covenant with us it is an agreement that we make - that we will both do our part to get a job done. There's never a question about God and his ability and commitment to get His part of the job done. Those are called promises. It is a little sad, however, that our part of the bargain is always in question. Upholding our part always takes His grace and forgiveness. We regularly slip, we regularly disobey, we regularly forget, we regularly get distracted. **Thankfully, God is merciful, God is forgiving, and God is patient.**

When we GET that our place as a child of God is to serve - that the least shall be greatest - only then we will be considered true partners with God.

"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:11)

When we achieve perfection as God measures perfection, (perfect love, patience, forgiveness, generosity, endurance, etc.) then we will be working right alongside Him. We need to make ourselves ready for the marriage.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." (Revelation 19:7)

The provision for us that God made in His plan is that He came in the flesh as a man. He did the perfection thing on His own - for us. The Messiah was that partner who upheld our end of the bargain perfectly - for us.

God saw that his creation was good. We are good. He has such confidence in that, that he sent his only son to die for us.

That is why **our work is to believe in Him** that the Father sent.

Therefore, they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." (John 6:28-29)

Our job is to have and exercise faith. Our job is to dwell in Him and allow Him to dwell in us. But, we're sinful and He cannot dwell in sin. So, through His perfect love for us, through His Mercy and Grace, He allowed for us to repent and be washed clean.

Our first job is to repent and accept His mercy and grace. After that, we need to believe, obey, endure, trust... so that tomorrow, should we be considered worthy of being first fruits, we can partnership with God to accomplish a bigger job. That is, accomplish the job of Kings and Priests.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Peace to you and glory to God.

-Nate

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