

The Circle Dance

The timeless message that Jesus of Nazareth had for audience was the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Now excuse me that I have used only male pronouns, that's not my intent to be chauvinistic, it's just the limitations of our language, but allow me to explain.

What I mean by Fatherhood is that God is our Source.

We have come from Him.

Our spirits have emanated from God.

God is not a male or a female.

In fact, both male and female were made in His image (Genesis 1:27).

There is a more what we would describe as "masculine" attributes of God and more feminine attributes.

- We see God with a feminine nurturing and motherly qualities .
- And we also see more fatherly qualities of God.
- Yet, maleness and females are biological categories, and God is a Being who is beyond those categories, for He is the giver of life.
- In order to be gender neutral we could use "it" to describe God, but since we believe in a personal and benevolent God, that it's not fitting to describe Him as an "it".

The brotherhood of man has to do with how we are more related and interconnected than we realize.

We were born into a network of human beings, not for adversity or antagonization, but for empowering one another through serving, sharing, and honoring one another.

Cain and Abel, two brothers we meet in the early chapters of the Hebrew Bible, were not made for competition, but for completion.

Abel raised livestock.

Cain worked the field.

They were to share their resources, cheer each other on, and brag about each other, not compete with one another.

They were to be brothers, not enemies.

Adam and Eve lived in harmony in the Garden of Eden, where they were naked and unashamed (Genesis 2:25)- which reveals to us that their relationship was marked by: authenticity, transparency, and acceptance.

This was how this planet was to operate.

This was God's dream for humanity...

- That we would know Him as our beloved Source and to know one another as all part of one body, the same team.
- That we would be and remain abiding in the SOURCE and in peace and harmony with rest of the BODY (team humanity).

The early church fathers described the Trinity using the term:

PERICHORESIS

(Peri = circle and choresis = dance).

They saw God as a circle dance.

It's a metaphor, and that's the best we can do with spiritual realities. We can't always explain things fully and literally, but metaphorically.

Metaphors serve as windows into deep mysteries that we may not be able to fully fathom.

There is no emptiness, depression, or fear in this circle dance, only intimacy, passion, delight, and others-centered love.

Dr. C. Baxter Kruger called this union the womb of humanity.

The human race came forth out of this circle, this womb of love.

- Perhaps that's why deep within, we long to get back to where we came from.

Can you see picture the Three dancing, united in such harmony, grace, beauty, and love, and they are generating movement that catches the eye and captivates the heart.

I believe it was God's will was that He would be like a tornado, sucking in all the world into a vortex of divine love.

God is not a boring or static being.

He's dynamic, energetic, and alluring.

Once upon a time, the circle dance just consisted of the Father, Son, and the Spirit.

- They are moving so fast, it's hard to distinguish who is who, and separate one from the other.
- You just see a blur. Obviously there is one circle, one tornado, but it's communal.

But...God wanted to expand the circle....not out of an ego need (like an insecure man trying to grow his business/church to feel better about Himself), but out of a heart overflowing with others-centered love (there is a self-centered love, where we leech onto others to be our supply).

His love doesn't drain humanity, He supplies.
He's not needy, He's abundance.
And God is intensely relational.

Therefore, He created humanity, in His image, so we would be born of the circle dance and invited back into the circle dance.

* He desired that we be in rhythm with Him, joined in love to Him and designed us to be joined to one another- so we as the human race would know the bliss of God.

Now, this circle dance is a metaphor, it's not literal.
I'm glad because I get motion sickness easily and don't like being dizzy.
But, just picture three persons dancing in frolic joy and fancy rhythm,
without a worry in the world.

Then, the circle expands.

More dancers enter in, experiencing and becoming conduits of the life-giving energy that's in the dance.

This dance was to go on forever, that's why it's a circle dance, not a sprint.
There is no finish line. God created us for eternal fellowship with Him and one another.

To give you an over simplistic, and yet potentially insightful summary of what has been going on for thousand years is this: **People can't seem to stay in the circle dance.**

We let go of each others hands.

We trip over one another.

We step on one another.

We thought it was a wrestling or boxing match, when it was to be a dance.

We are out of sync with God and in disharmony with one another, a disjointed body.

Jesus was very familiar with the dance of God. He was also acutely aware that people have fallen out of the cycle.

We were disconnected from the Source (Father), only to find themselves as a plant that disconnected from the soil. (The source of the plant is the soil.)

He saw that much of humanity had fallen out of the divine circle dance.

He clearly stated His intentions and mission,

- **“I have come to seek and to save that which was lost...” (Luke 19:10)** We were lost out of the circle dance.
- Then Jesus, **“I have come that you may have life and life more than abundant” (John 10:10)**, abundant life is being restored to the circle dance.
- He explains to a religious leader, **“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him will not**

perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) Everlasting life is entering into the circle dance, outside of the dance, people perish.

This is what Jesus came to do, He intimately knows God’s original intent for humanity. He came to see us relationally restored to God and one another.

This explains why His commandment was:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

- When we love God, we take His hand.
- When we love our neighbor, we take his and her hand.
- And we are back in the Divine Dance.

According to Paul of Tarsus, the Divine Dance is life in the Spirit, outside the Divine Dance is the flesh.

- When we are in the flesh, we cannot please God, and we devour one another.

“The entire Law is fulfilled in a single decree: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out, or you will be consumed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:14-16)

When we are in the mode of devouring one another, we aren’t in the dance anymore, we have stepped out of the right.

Jesus, in His notable Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), warned against OBJECTIFYING one another via lust and greed.

- For that will also cause us to destroy one another instead of enjoying the dance.

To dive deeper into this illustration of the dance, when we are no longer joined in love to the humanity around us, by default, we are out of the dance.

- So you wanted to hold God's hand, you just hate your brother or sister, neighbor or co-worker, and you let go of their hand. You are out of the circle.
- Someone may say, "I only want to hold God's hand...forget humans...I only like animals..." They are out of the circle.
- You stay in the circle as you are joined in love to God and joined in love to team humanity.

St. John, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, would write in His old age, that those who don't love their brother, is in darkness, and is not in the Divine Dance, so doesn't experientially know God.

***"Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."* (1 John 2:9-11)**

- You can be reading your Bible until your vision goes bad,
- praying your prayers until your voice gives out,
- act super spiritual and be religiously devout,
- but you can be out of the divine dance,

- and practicing your religion in vain.
- That's what Paul meant by saying that apart from love, "**Apart from love...I gain nothing...I am nothing**" (see 1 Corinthians 13:2-3).

All our tricks and accomplishments are vain when we are performing outside of the divine dance.

- Jesus will say to those who worked their tails off, trying to serve God, but did it outside of the divine dance,
- "**I never knew you...**" (Matthew 7:23).
- In other words, we didn't dance together.

In the four gospels, we find Jesus inviting people into the divine dance.

He teaches His disciples to pray, saying "Our Father". He wanted to connect humanity to the Fatherhood of God.

Moreover, in that prayer He teaches them to extend forgiveness towards those who have trespassed against us.

"Forgive us of our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us."

- We ought to receive forgiveness and extend forgiveness.
- **Forgiveness is the key to living in the circle dance.**
- We have to accept that we are forgiven by grace. That gives us confidence to enter into the dance.
- We have to extend forgiveness to all humanity. That enables us to stay in the dance.

Both elements are needed to live in the dance, not just saying, "Our Father..." but also extended forgiveness.

- For un-forgiveness keeps us out of the dance.
- Jesus told a parable that the one who didn't know how to forgive was sent to the tormentors (see Matthew 18:34).
- In the dance there is comfort. Outside the dance there is torment.

- Everywhere Jesus went, He invited people into the dance.
- It's not a closed dance.
- In fact, when someone joins the dance, all the dance rejoices!

By the way, you don't lose your individuality and uniqueness in the dance.

- The three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, don't lose their individuality.
- It's not communist uniformity God is after, but a unity that comes by love.
- We will still have our own personality, yet, when we are in the circle- we are the best version of ourselves.

Jesus wasn't trying to get people to join a religion, but enter into something so much bigger, so more greater, and so much more ancient- the divine dance.

- It's a dance where we enjoy the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Again, sorry for the male pronouns, but you get the point.

So Paul writes that Jesus came to destroy the walls of hostility. Hostility kills the dance. Jesus came to kill what kills the dance.

“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14)

Paul writes about how we are really one body (Romans 12:5).

- This is another profound metaphor that conveys that we more interconnected than we realize.
- I think when we mistreat someone in body, it's like the mouth biting off the feet, or the fingers gouging out the eyes.
- We are to work together in harmony, not war with one another. You can have a mangled body if you don't honor one another.
- Truth be told, we have a fractured humanity because we don't realize how hurting someone is hurting ourselves, because we are all interconnect and we are ONE team, team humanity.
- God is for team humanity, He even joined it!
- Imagine all the churches that would have never split if we realized we were on the same team.

Now, those who are self-amputated body parts, or those who have isolated themselves from others are not living in the divine circle.

- In the circle, you are in a relational swirl - connected, connecting, and knowing, and being known.
- It's not godly or pious to live disconnected, it's very inhumane and unnatural, and leads to perversions (which is simply not having the right version).
- We can even say it's evil to live isolated.

“Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.” (Proverbs 18:1)

Jesus taught us to love our enemies, bless those who curse us, and pray for those who spitefully use us (Luke 6:27-28).

- If you love your enemies, that means they aren't your enemies anymore.

- I think that was the point, don't see people as enemies, but as people.
- We like to draw a line and put people in the friend category and people in the enemy category, but we need to see people as people.
- Not saying we trust everyone, but it means that we don't condemn anyone.
- It's a reminder that even the worst of people, are still on team humanity.
- They too are invited to be in the divine dance where transformation happens.

To bless those who curse us and pray for those who use us means that we are going to be pulling for them, cheer them on, and hope that they enter into the divine dance.

I used to think we had to pray for the jerks in the world, because God was impotent to change a jerk and needs the assistance of our prayers.

- Yet, now I realize Jesus is teaching us to bless and pray for our least favorite people because He wants us to stay in the divine dance.
- It's not that He needs our help to change others, it's that we need to help ourselves.

Our least favorite people are knowingly or unknowingly attempting to pull us out of the divine dance, and we need to keep blessing them and praying for them so WE can remain in the dance, and not get sucked into the boxing ring with our own teammates.

The prayer of Jesus of Nazareth was that His followers would be one with each other as God is one (John 17:21-22).

- Jesus was praying for God's will to be done on earth, the Divine Dance. In which we take the hand of God and the hand of humanity and be joined in love.

“I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their message, 21that all of them may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22I have given them the glory You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one” (John 17:20-22)

Seeing humanity restored to the circle dance was the prayer, the mission, and the vision of Jesus, and as followers of Jesus, it should be ours as well.

We ought to follow Jesus into the divine dance and share in His deep desire to see the CIRCLE GROW.

How can we creatively and practically invite people who may be out of the circle dance, into it?

Is Jesus really the one we are following, or just worshipping?

- It's easy to sing love songs to and about someone, but it's another thing to follow that person's example and embody their message.
- It's more important to display the spirit of Jesus rather than just singing about Him or confessing our doctrine about Him.
- It's easy to be a fan, rather than a follower.
- It's easier to cheer from the rafters than join Him on the court.
- That's why Jesus had to ask some of his fans, **“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ but do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46).**

Sadly, Jesus has become a MASCOT who we rally around, instead of our MASTER-TEACHER, whose way we have learned to walk, whose spirit we display, and whose teachings we embody.

If we are really following Jesus, let's follow Him into the divine dance: enjoying the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This is the reconciliation He fought for.

While in the dance, that's when we become the light of the world.

- That's when others begin to realize it's better in the dance than outside of it.
- Others become thirsty for God in our presence.
- That's when we bring healing to those around us.
- That was the secret to Jesus healing ministry, He was a man who was in living in the dance.

Hope this will be a year where we keep ourselves in the dance and invite others in.

It's an open circle!

The invitation is there.

That's what Baptism is about, it's a ceremony celebrating that you will be enrolling in the dance (that's why we get baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the original dancers, the founders).

- We are joining their dance.
- Let's expand the circle.
- This year, someone you know and care about, will get off the wrestling mat, out of the boxing ring, will retire from being a vampire (of fellow humanity), and this year someone will enter into the dance and experience the bliss of God.