

CHAPTER 4

THE CROSS AND THE FATHER'S ULTIMATE INTENTION

THE PARADIGM OF THE CROSS — THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF THE FATHER'S HEART

. . . you have received the Spirit of adoption—the Spirit producing sonship—in [the bliss of] which **we cry, Abba!** [That is,] Father! . . . And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ – sharing His inheritance with Him: only **we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.** (Rom. 8:17 – The Amplified Bible) (Emphases mine)

About the same time that I became interested in the Cross as a paradigm, I was impacted deeply by the teaching ministry of Jack Frost about the love of God as my Father. I shed many tears— healing tears—as I listened over and over to his tapes and attended his conferences.¹ The theme of the Father's love is certainly worthy of the number of books and conferences dealing with it.

Sometimes, I have pictured myself as a young child sitting on the Father's knee and found healing from some of the hurts of my childhood. On one occasion, after my realization of the importance of being conformed to Christ's death, I was enjoying the Father's loving embrace, when it seemed I was being drawn right inside His heart. The whole interior of His heart appeared to be filled with a large cross!

On another occasion, when I was enjoying the Father's love as a child on His knees, I could see nail scars in His hands. The Scripture came to mind that “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9b). Realizing that there was real significance to these experiences, I sought to understand more deeply the implications of the Cross as an expression of the Father's love.

Along with these wonderful experiences and revelations, I began to have some concern about some of the teaching I was hearing about the Father's love in which concepts seemed to come from “New Age” teaching or from other religious concepts rather than from the Bible. It was evident to me that we need to make sure **we learn who our Father is through the revelation of His nature through Jesus, and it was clear to me also that the paradigm of the Cross is crucial in the revelation of the Father's nature.**

I did not read or hear good teaching that helped me perceive further the importance of the seeing in the suffering of Jesus a revelation of the Father's heart until the spring of 2003, when I discovered in a used book sale a book that I had read many years ago but had forgotten about: *The Ultimate Intention* by DeVern Fromke.² Note how Fromke uses the term “Cross-principle” to mean essentially the same as the “paradigm of the Cross”:

It may come as a surprise to some when we suggest that the Cross has always been an eternal principle in God. It is not an after thought or accident in the universe, nor is it a principle read into things by loving hearts. It is inherent in God. **This Cross-principle which seems woven into the very bosom of the Father** is demonstrated by the Son and interpreted by the Spirit. It has ever been the principle of action by which the Godhead would surely bring to pass the divine intention.

¹Jack Frost, *Healing the Wounded Heart*, Series on Cassette: Shiloh Place Ministries. P.O. Box 5, Conway, SC, U.S.A. 29528, www.shilohplace.org.

²DeVern F. Fromke, *The Ultimate Intention* (Indianapolis, IN: Sure Foundation, 1963).

We see then that the Cross is far more than an act in history. **It expresses the very qualities and manner of life of the triune God.** It is the life-giving, light-sharing, and love-bestowing principle by which God has dealt with man from the beginning . . .

In thinking of the Cross only as a redemptive measure, we have missed God's larger intention. Yet the whole inference of Scripture is that from the beginning the Father longed for a family of sons who would embrace the same Cross-principle that has ever governed His own heart. **It was His intention that the Cross might be so inwrought in these sons as to become their manner and purpose of life.**³

We realize as long as man is still interpreting the Cross as it benefits him, as it works for his own safety, security, and victory, he is wearing a pair of colored glasses . . . But as the believer begins to interpret the Cross as an eternal principle which God intends to be operative in him, then he sees the Cross in a new light . . . We may speak of entering *the way of the Cross* when the Cross . . . becomes operative within the believer.⁴ (Emphases mine)

Notice how Paul expresses this Cross-principle or paradigm working in him:

We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. (2 Cor. 4:10-12)

Many are seeking for the abundant life and miss the point that the true abundant life of Jesus Christ — a life full of the Father's love — is only found through death, the way of the Cross. This paradox seems foolish to those without a revelation of the Holy Spirit, as this paraphrase shows:

This message of the paradigm of the Cross is foolishness to those who embrace a selfish way of life and thus are perishing; but to us who are being changed into the paradigm of the Cross ("being saved"), it is the very power needed to accomplish this. (Based on 1 Cor. 1:18)

As the Lord by His Spirit opens our eyes, we see progressively more clearly the awesome, glorious love of the Father shine forth through Jesus' suffering and death. **The Father's ultimate intention is that we be changed into that same glory, able to love others truly as He has loved us.** Some day the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Father's love—with the paradigm of the cross!

In considering the Father's ultimate intention, it becomes also our intention with everyone with whom we relate that they, too, express the paradigm of the Cross. Our life then is dedicated to seeing the Father's purpose carried out in the lives of others and also to having Him continually change us to accomplish His purpose in others through us. The words of Paul in Colossians found below are becoming words that I want to echo for myself—could this be your goal also?

Now I rejoice for **your sakes in sufferings**, and I would fill up in my body the extreme of Christ's affliction, for the sake of His body—the church; . . . to accomplish the **Divine intention** . . . which we proclaim; warning every man, and teaching every person in a perfect philosophy, so that we may present each one perfect in Christ [i.e., **totally conformed to His death**]; to which object I vigorously strive with His mighty energy working in us. (Col. 1:25-29, F. Fenton)⁵ [Emphases mine]

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³DeVern F. Fromke, *The Ultimate Intention*, 56.

⁴DeVern F. Fromke, 88.

⁵Ferrar Fenton, *The Holy Bible in Modern English* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1944), 1219.

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