

A photograph of a forest path in autumn. The path is covered in fallen brown and orange leaves. The trees in the background have some green and some yellowing leaves. The text is overlaid on the image.

THE HEART OF GOD II

PAUL COZZA

The Heart of God II

Paul Cozza



A Place in the Wilderness

The Heart of God II

© 2022 Paul Cozza

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, or any other, including photocopy, recording, or any information or retrieval system—without prior written consent, in hardcopy paper form, from:

Paul Cozza
A Place in the Wilderness

Email: paul@aplaceinthewilderness.com
Website: aplaceinthewilderness.com

Scripture quotations are from the
American Standard Version of the Bible (1901)
unless otherwise noted.



A man had six cats, all of which lived outside, for they were outdoor cats. How this man came to have six outdoor cats is an interesting, humorous, and heart-touching story, but it is not the story I now tell. Perhaps that tale will be for another time.

Love and Care

Over time, this man began to love these cats dearly. They were his friends and companions. They would often sit on his outdoor windowsills, looking in at him and begging, hoping they could come inside or he would come out. It seemed they loved him also, although perhaps they simply loved the food he gave them.

This man did his best to care for them. He fed them, gave them water, and often times tried to resolve the disputes that arose among them. Cats being cats, there were numerous disputes!

Anchored

He spent a good deal of time with them each day, making sure they were cared for and well. The cats became a kind of “anchor,” binding him by his love for them to the land they called home. The man did not mind this restriction. He felt not only love toward the cats, but also a responsibility for them. After all, they had been placed in his care. He had to care for them in the best way he could.

The man fed them morning and evening, with excellent and delicious cat food. He did what he could to keep them trim and healthy. He treated them for flea and tick prevention; he gave them medication as needed; he brushed them and played with them.

Mealtime

Of the six, two were adults and the other four were growing kittens. The two adults rarely missed their meals; with the kittens it was a different story. Occasionally, one would miss a meal—perhaps he or she had overslept. Occasionally they would come in a bit late and then have to eat leftovers. Every so often, one would not appear for a meal at all. Perhaps he or she had fed itself on a field rat or two.

One of the kittens, named Cello, would occasionally miss two or three meals in succession. However, one time she missed multiple meals in a row.



Cello was small, slender, and slightly built. She would be no match for any feral cat or other carnivore seeking to do her harm. The man was concerned, for he did not know what had happened to her. When multiple days passed with Cello neither coming at mealtime nor appearing unannounced during the day, the man became very concerned. Perhaps Cello was injured or sick. Perhaps she had gotten lost, or worse. The man hoped that one of his neighbors had taken up feeding her, so at least she would be tended to properly.

Searching

The man visited each of the places in his fairly large yard where Cello might be hiding or sleeping. One by one, he went to each and called her name: “Cello! Cello! Cello!” But there was no response. Cello seemed gone.

The man contacted his neighbors to see if they had seen the cat recently. None had spotted her in weeks.

One morning, as the man knelt in prayer, he spoke to his Lord about Cello. The man felt very limited. He wanted to do more for the kitten, but he could not. He prayed, “Lord, guide her home.” While such requests seem trivial and insignificant—something beneath what God should care about—he knew his Lord. His Lord cared about all, from the lowest to the highest,

whether human or animal. His Lord's heart was that great.

An Answer

Later that day, the man went out to survey some damage to the trees in his yard. He was on a hill, and as he surveyed the trees, he looked down into some brush piles below him. Cello used to love those piles. He called her name again, not too loudly, but still with some hope: "Cello! Cello! Cello!" There was no response. Concerned but not anxious, he started walking back up the hill. As he did, he turned back to give one last call: "Cello!"

From the brush pile immediately below him, he heard a soft and unmistakable mewling. Cello appeared at the edge of the brush pile, looking up at him. Although she was perhaps 150 feet away, she recognized him and he recognized her. He called to her, and she softly responded as she began walking toward him up the hill.

Reunion

When she reached him, he picked her up and gently patted her. He spoke softly to her, asking of her welfare. He noticed how thin she had become; she certainly had not eaten well during the days of her absence.

She was indeed happy to see him. She rubbed her cheek against his hand, and snuggled in his arm. When he put her down, she walked back and forth between his legs, rubbing against them in a show of her affection. They walked back to his house, to the place she knew as her home.

He fed her, and then fed her more, and then still more. She was extraordinarily famished. She ate enough for two or three cats. He then spent much time with her, just being there, near his dear friend. He was not only relieved, but so happy to see her again. As he looked at her and stroked her soft fur, he started weeping. He was not weeping because she had returned—he was weeping because he was realizing something deeper about his divine Father’s heart.

The Father

In one of the parables of Luke 15, from a great distance a father sees his son coming home. He must have been looking for him, hoping for his return. The father was deeply concerned for his son. He had been gone for quite some time, and the father had learned his son had spent all his inheritance on profligate living, and as a result had been living in squalor with little to eat.

He had been looking for his son, searching for him, hoping to find some means to bring him home. He had

done all within his power to help him. He had sent out a trusted companion¹ to try to find the young man. He had even sent out his dearest friend² to, if possible, help his son home. However, none of this would avail anything if his son chose to continue on his destructive path. But now his son was returning!

The Father's Love

When he saw his son coming home, he ran out to meet him, being moved with compassion. The father, no doubt, saw the state of his son: starving, emaciated, bedraggled, and half-naked. So, springing forth from his great love for his son came compassion—his heart was deeply moved for his son's condition.

The father could not restrain himself. He longed for his son, who was so dear to him. He ran to him, not caring how his son looked or smelled.

The father fell upon his neck, overcome by the deep emotions he felt. He kissed him. Although Luke does not record this, I have no doubt that this father wept as he greeted his son. He wept with tears of love, joy, and relief. His son—so long lost—had been found. His son, who was dead, was alive again. His son had come home.

¹ Luke 15:8–9

² Luke 15:3–6

As he embraced his son, the father called his servants and commanded them: “Put the best robe on him, and a ring on his finger, and sandals upon his feet.” No ordinary robe would do for his son. It must be the best robe. And, he must be sealed with a ring of gold. Nor would he let anything of the Earth touch his son’s feet.

And his son was starving, so he killed the fatted calf. He declared, “Let my son eat and let us all feast and rejoice with him. For this my son was lost and has been found; he was dead and lives again.” How great was this father’s love toward his son.

The Divine Father

We have such a divine Father. Although the Lord used what seem to be parables to describe God’s seeking of lost souls, in actuality these parables are depicting spiritual reality. The Father sent forth His Spirit—poured it out upon humanity—to find lost souls. These souls are lost beneath a torrent of evil, deceiving, corrupting, and damaging spirits. This spiritual morass confounds men, distracts them from God, and buries them beneath a deadly avalanche of ungodly and sinful thought.

His Spirit

The Father longs for His children, and does everything possible to bring them home to Him. His Spirit sweeps the “house,” looking for lost souls. He is sweeping away all the dirt, mud, and obstructions that keep souls from God. This seeking Spirit comes forth from our Father’s heart.

His Son

The Father sends forth His only begotten Son to find the lost and bring them home, carrying them in His arms. The Father’s dear Son even died to free the lost souls from the chains that bound them. He is truly the good Shepherd, caring so much for the Father’s sheep that He laid down His life for them. The Father has such a heart—full of love, compassion, longing, mercy, forgiveness, and hope.

Lost and Dead

We all were lost, and so many still are. We were far from God, spending our human life on wasteful and useless matters. We did not know God; we had no realization of His heart for us and His deep desire toward us. He was searching for us, trying to find us, even though we were surrounded by darkness.

We were dead in our many offenses and sins. We did not know, could not see, nor were we able to hear this unspeakably loving God who was seeking us, coming out to find us, and opening His arms to carry us home. We were dead to Him and to all that He is.

In the midst of such death and darkness, such confusion and chaos, such hopelessness and despair, He found us. *He found us!* Though we were dead, He found a way to reach us. He diffused a ray of light, a quickening—life-giving—gleam toward us, a kind of beacon to show us the way.

As we turned toward the light, He saw us. *He saw us!* He came out to meet us. He carried us home in His arms. He fell upon our neck and kissed us. What kind of heart our divine Father has!

Still Seeking

How many souls are still lost and still dead? How many are unimaginably damaged, unable to walk one step towards God? How many have no hope and are drowning in a literal, spiritual sea of despair? How many are encompassed by the evil of spiritual forces who are trying to destroy them? May God find them, even as He has found us; may He enliven them, even as He has enlivened us; may He bring them home in His arms to the unimaginably great love of the Father who is seeking them.



