

THE HEART OF GOD VI



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A Place in the Wilderness

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

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The man held the tiny hummingbird in his hand. Though unconscious, it was still breathing. He softly examined it and saw no wounds. If the bird was seriously injured, it was due to some internal damage.

The man walked back and forth with the bird kept gently enfolded. He expected the little being to die at any moment, and he did not want it to die alone. But the small creature did not die. The man wondered if it was possible to help it.

Predator

One of the outdoor cats that roamed about his house had come running up to the window next to where he stood with the bird in his mouth. The man had rapidly opened the window and given the cat a couple of quick solid raps to the head to get him to drop the bird and move away. He then had quickly

scooped up the little creature and brought him indoors, closing the window after him.

A Plan

Now he considered what to do. The bird stirred a bit in his hand but was otherwise still. After some consideration, the man formulated a plan.

Keeping the little bird in one hand, with his other hand he managed to get a large glass bowl from his cupboard and placed it on his counter. Then he took the bottom of a hummingbird feeder—the feeding tray—from his sink, where he had been cleaning it.

He opened his refrigerator—all the while holding the hummingbird safely in his hand—and moved a large container of sugar water forward, so that its spigot was accessible. Placing the bottom of the feeding tray under the spigot, he somehow was able to dispense a good amount of sugar water into the tray. He then placed the feeding tray into the large glass bowl.

Next, he gently placed the wounded hummingbird onto the tray next to one of the feeding holes. He hoped the bird would drink from the sugar

water. Without food, the hummingbird would die within a few hours, even if his injury was not fatal. Finally, he placed a cover onto the bowl—he did not want the hummingbird to awaken and fly off into his house.

Monitoring

A short time later, the man returned to check on the health of his new little friend. He was awake, sitting up, and had his eyes open. The man was encouraged. However, the hummingbird was still not eating.

After a time, and seeing no further improvement, the man took the bowl with the bird outside. He opened it to the air, hoping the hummingbird would fly off. Indeed, the bird flapped his wings a few times in an attempt, but then stopped. Whatever was wrong with him kept him from flying off to his companions.

The hummingbird had been breathing rapidly, about four breaths per second. But this is typical for hummingbirds. The man noticed that the little fellow's respiration was slowing—not a good sign.

Crying Out to God

As his breathing slowed still further, the man spoke with his God. The man sorely wanted the little being to live. He asked his Father to give the hummingbird some of his own life, if that were possible. However, the little one steadily declined.

The tiny bird was gasping for breath and his breathing had slowed to once per second. It was evident he would die soon. The man named him Valiant—Little Valiant—because he was struggling so hard to live. The bird was suffering and dying, and there seemed no way to help him.

There was no good path before the man—Little Valiant would suffer and die, or the man could end his life. How helpless he felt... Looking to his God, he ended Little Valiant's suffering and wept.

The Pitiable Creation

The man was distressed, not for himself, but for the creation of which he was a part. How many times he had seen the beautiful creatures around him suffering and dying. It was not that they had done something wrong—many of them had not. It

was that this whole creation was subject to death. The man knew this was not how it should be, but this is how it was, and he was helpless to save the little beings he so greatly loved.

Heartbroken

His day was hard, for his heart was heavy. The man knew that his God was currently limited. He had given many of His creatures a free will, and He would not—could not—interfere with that free will. When some rebelled, God allowed it—He had no choice. To interfere would be to prevent the exercise of the free will He had granted. In essence, it would mean God’s gift of a free will was not real, but illusory. However, God is real, as are His gifts.

That evening the man went to a friend’s house for dinner. Upon seeing the look in his eyes, his friend—who knew him well—immediately asked, “What is wrong?” The man could only say he couldn’t speak about it. It was too painful.

When they blessed their meal, the man prayed a sentence, then his words caught in his throat, and he could say no more. His friend watched with concerned silence.

As the man drove home that evening, Little Valiant was on his heart. He grieved for the little one whom he considered to be a friend. He grieved for his suffering and death. He was troubled that he could do nothing to help the poor little creature.

No Good Path

He recalled how sometime earlier he had been faced with a situation that was in some way similar. In that case, he had pondered and prayed for quite a while concerning how to handle that situation. But there was no good way. Every choice that was before him ended in damage of one kind or another. In the end, he had to simply choose the path of least damage. Similarly, with Little Valiant, he had chosen the path of least suffering.

In both situations, he was helpless to do something good. As he pondered that, a small door opened into the heart of his Father. It had never occurred to him before that his Father was also helpless. How could God be helpless? Yet, He was.

Free Will

God had given man a free will. He could not force man to choose something against his own will. To do so would mean He never really gave man a free will to begin with. It would mean God lied. However, God cannot lie.¹ Therefore, He cannot force any man to make any choice.

However, God can reach out to man again and again, offering the salvation He accomplished through Christ's death on the cross. Each man makes his own choice whether to receive this salvation or not. If he chooses not to do so, God nevertheless continues to reach out, attempting in some way to reach the heart of the wayward man.

God's Heart

God wants to save and greatly desires to do so. He loves His creation deeply, and in particular He loves man. However, each man chooses his own

¹ Tit. 1:2

path and may choose one leading to destruction. Yet, it is not God's heart that any should perish.¹

How does God feel about this? If the Lord was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,² how does our Father feel about the perishing sinners? He too is deeply grieved and sorrowful, for He—like the man of this story—is also helpless to save. He is helpless to save those who choose not to be saved.

How His heart must ache over the many who are perishing. If we consider how many lost souls there are, how many greatly damaged people, and how many who have given themselves over to evil in one way or another, the immensity of our Father's own grief and sorrow begins to dawn upon our heart.

The Foreknowledge of God

Before creation, God foresaw all that would happen.³ He knew the suffering He would have to

¹ 1 Tim. 2:4

² Is. 53:3

³ 1 Pet. 1:2

endure if He created and gave His creatures a free will. Yet, He created anyway.

He knew His creatures would suffer, and He chose to suffer with them.¹ How much He has endured is beyond our capacity to grasp. Yet, He chose this path. It is this path that somehow befits our God—the path of suffering and agony is the only one that is fitting for Him.

Partaking of God's Way

As we come closer to Him, He may open the way for us to share in very little part what He is passing through. In our youth, we may have shunned this way and denied its very existence. We may have said, "How can God suffer? He is God." We may have closed our eyes to that "door" and, in doing so, closed our eyes to our Father's heart.

But, as we come close, He brings us into His depths. Shall we not accept this path? We have accepted so many things from our Father. Shall we—like little children—only accept those things we like? Or shall we, for our part, share His path of

¹ Matt. 10:29

suffering, sorrow, and grief? On this path, something eternal is worked out within us that cannot be had in any other way.

God is calling some to share this path, not only for our own sake, nor even for God's sake, but for the sake of the creation about which we suffer. Those who suffer with God for the sake of His creation will one day become its caretakers due to what they have passed through. God will find these ones faithful, worthy, equipped, and trained for such an eternal service. It is also befitting for those who suffer with God for His creation to care for it eternally.

If we see the suffering our God is passing through, we will be moved to leave everything of the world¹ and self behind² and be filled with Christ in all our heart.³ By this, God's field of the believers will mature.⁴ Satan will be cast down from before the throne of God,⁵ and God's kingdom and Christ's

¹ Gal. 6:14

² Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6

³ Eph. 3:17–19

⁴ Matt. 13:30

⁵ Rev. 12:9

authority will come.¹ The Lord will return, bringing in His Millennial Kingdom² and the restoration of all things.³ Then, peace will reign on the Earth⁴ and all God's creatures will enjoy the safety, security, and blessing⁵ of Christ's reign with His many brothers.⁶

Blessed be God our Father and His dear Son,
who have so blessed us.



¹ Rev. 12:10

² Rev. 20:4

³ Acts 3:20–21

⁴ Is. 9:6–7; Zech 9:10

⁵ Is. 11:6–9

⁶ Rev. 20:4