

A year ago I was on a plane getting ready to go to Germany. An older woman took the seat next to me. She immediately noticed my open Bible and commented "That's a good thing to do before we fly! I'm really nervous!" I laughed and told her I read it every day, flying or not. She said that was quite unusual, to which I readily agreed. She then told me she was a Catholic school teacher and administrator and often taught religion classes. "Oh really," I replied. "Well then, do you want the whole story in prepositions?" She eagerly affirmed the idea, and so I said. "We were made *by* God; we were made *like* God; we were made *for* God; but we ran *from* God; but were sought *by* God, to be restored *to* God, so we could live *with* God face *to* face forever." She asked me to repeat it (slowly) so she could write it down. That led into a delightful 90 minutes of filling in the details and sharing the gospel.

With the holidays upon us, we can't help but think about people and places, locations, relationships. The stuff of prepositions! Prepositions are key parts of any sentence. They provide us with bearings: location, origin, direction, destination, relationship. I've been thinking a lot about perspective and balance lately. Getting our bearings is an integral part of maintaining perspective and balance. Let me share three "precious prepositions" that may help restore some perspective for you today.

1) God *For* us! Romans 8:31 "if God is for us, who can be against us?" (That is: if God is for us, interested in us, dedicated to us, focused on our good, totally committed to our deliverance and glorification, it really doesn't matter who is against us since God is over, above, beyond any and all our enemies and guarantees our eventual triumph.)

"God is for us" is an amazing truth. Think about it. God is on your side. God is really committed to your glorification and the daily processes He initiates to carry it out. He loves you and is vitally interested in every detail of your life. He calls you His own and is not ashamed to be called your God. *He is for you!* He has given His only Son to make you His child and will spare nothing to make you like himself and to bring you safely home. *He is for you!* God is delighted in having you as His own. He chose you from before time and put all of heaven and earth in motion to redeem and glorify you in His presence forever. His thoughts for you are numberless. Old Jacob said "all these things are against me" Gen 42:36; but they were all being worked together for his deliverance by *the God who was for him!* God is for us!

2) God *With* us! Matt 1:23; Isa 7:15 His name is Emmanuel meaning "God with us." God demonstrated that He is *for us* by giving His one and only Son *to come for us, be with us, become one of us and die for us.* This is even more incredible, if possible, than God being *for us.* For to be "God with us" meant incarnation and there is no miracle to compare with the incarnation. Think of it. That God *could* become man. (the infinite becomes an infant); that God *would* become man (to take on our flesh, form, guilt, our punishment); That God *did* become man (the immortal robed in mortal flesh; for He took not on the nature of angels, but of rebel man); That God did become man *forever and evermore* (for the incarnation is everlasting; He did not become man for 33 years, but for forever in a risen, glorified humanity; He made Himself *one with us* forever!) **God didn't love us from a distance!**

3) God *In* us... 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Romans 8:9; John 14:17; Eph 2:22; Col 1:27 God is *for us* and thus He came to be *with us* that by His incarnation and redemption He might become *God in us.* *God for us* speaks of sovereign purpose and grace; *God with us* speaks of incarnation and redemption; *God in us* speaks of intimacy and transformation. He who is *for us* came to be *with us* that He might be *in us* and *us in him* forevermore.

You have entered into His mission in a unique way, having exchanged locations, cultures, and languages for the sake of relationships that will endure forever. How like God! You are "for them" you have given all to see them come to know your God. You are "with them" identifying with them in every way that is not sinful, because you intend to see them restored. You are able to do all of this because He who is in you has overcome the world and made you fellow over-comers in his victory. God did not love you from a distance. You have not loved this people from a distance. You came! Thank you!

For Further Study: Read Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2; John 1, Romans 8 and the book of Ephesians. Keep the phrases "God for us, God with us, God in us" in mind as you read. They reveal the reality that our Triune God is indeed God for us, God with us, God in us.

"Lord, sometimes I get the feeling that nothing is going right. I can easily utter Jacob's complaint "All these things are against me!" But I live on this side of the cross. I know better. I know You are *God for me,* and your purpose will prevail. I know you are *God with me,* interceding in heaven still bearing your wounds and my humanity as my elder brother. I know you are *God in me,* the hope of certain glory. Fill me with the truth of Who you are to me today. Renew my heart and will once more. Return to me that sense of certainty and security that flow from Your Spirit and your word. Thank you for not loving me from a distance! I pray in that most precious of names, EMMANUEL! Amen."

PS - I am attaching a poem & a meditation on Revelation 5 and the Incarnation & I hope you enjoy it. The pic is of our nativity scene.

Remember, we love you and are praying for you continually. Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Adios, Ron & Val

We see The Invisible, embrace The Unapproachable, declare The Unexplainable, are changed by The Immutable, run after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. This is the Pilgrim in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.