

# Jesus is the reason—Faithful One, meet selfish one

## I. Preamble & Prayer

### A. The lair and the red fox

- It was a meeting unlike any I had seen before
- I watched as a lion and his lioness and their cubs—a lair or lion family
- Came upon an injured red fox
- The red fox hissed at the father lion and the lioness—the cubs not much bigger than the fox, were curious
- But the father lion? With one sweep of his paw could render this little injured fluff ball an appetizer for this three little cubs
- But as I watched, something remarkable took place—the mother, the lioness, hovering over the red fox, saw the father lion prepare to do what instinctively came natural to him
- The mother, the lioness, sat down next to the red fox and with her face toward the father lion and reached out with one of her massive paws with claws exposed and let forth this giant roar
- So loud was the roar that it rendered the fox and cubs frozen in their places—and of course, it caused the papa lion to rethink his strategy
- The plan had changed, the mother, the lioness gathered the red fox close to herself, the little fella had stopped hissing and now knew where he stood
- It is remarkable, no, it's rather quite providential—that a lion's lair would take in a little injured red fox—and nurture and care for him for the remainder of the day until the little fella was able to continue on to his own den

### B. Creation's plan

- Did you know, that although sin has marred God's perfect work, the script God penned remains?
- Let me explain:
  - A. Not one bird clings to the air, no animal carries forth upon the ground, but that they minister to some other life
  - B. There is no leaf, needle or cone of the forest, or low lying blade of grass, but has its ministry
  - C. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life (oxygen) without which neither mankind or animal could survive
  - D. Mankind and animal in turn, exhale (carbon dioxide) and minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf
  - E. I stopped by one of my favorite rose bushes the other evening—stopped to smell the intoxicating fragrance and observe the beauty
  - F. Our sun sheds its light to bring a happy glow to a thousand worlds dotting the far reaches of our galaxy
  - G. Our oceans themselves, the source of all the springs and flowing fountains, receive the streams from every land—but take that they might *give back*
  - H. We're looking longingly to the mists to ascend from our nearby Pacific, to fall in showers upon our land, that our land may turn green once again

- Though sin has marred God’s handiwork, the script continues to be played out
  - Good angels, God’s angels, find their joy in giving; giving love and without growing weary continue their watch care over our souls—both *fallen* and *selfish*
  - There—right there is where the script has turned a complete 180 degrees
  - Ellen White wrote in her classic, *Desire of Ages*, written while in Australia, in 1898
  - She said, “There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself.” DA20
  - Can you imagine...that of all creation, we, the crowning act of creation, are the lone ones who look only to receive and not give back? To take with no thought of replenishing?
  - Thus, the message today, Jesus is the reason—Faithful One meet selfish one
- C. Prayer**—God, the eternal One, the Creator, the exalted One, please come and be seen as you are, the Faithful One, the One who’s love is unfailing, undaunted, and unequivocal in giving that you too might receive, emptying so that you may fill, dying so that life eternal lost may be regained. AMEN

## II. Message

### A. The Faithful One

- I invite you to open your Bible today
- Text: Hebrews 10:5-7 NLT
- These are words that Jesus Himself declares

*“That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, “You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for sin. Then I said, “Look, I have to do your will, O God—as is written about me in the Scriptures.”*

- Jesus is the reason
- He is the reason—
  - A. That we have hope
  - B. That we have any chance at all
  - C. That we have nothing to fear
- Why?
- Because he is the faithful One
- What makes Jesus the faithful One?
- **Answer #1: Because Jesus is the promised One**
- Many think that Jesus decided to come to earth when Adam and Eve sinned
- Oh he did promise to them that he would come at the point of their sin in the Garden of Eden
- But Jesus is the promised One, because that decision was one he had made long before the earth was even made

- TEXT: Romans 16:25 WYC

*“And honour and glory be to him, that is mighty to confirm you by my gospel, and preaching of Jesus Christ, by the revelation of mystery held still in times everlasting.”*

- Held still in times everlasting—holden still, that is, *not showed*, in times everlasting
- Plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, something God was taken unawares by...and developed after the fall of Adam
- He is the promised One, because the promise has stood in times everlasting! AMEN!
- What makes Jesus the faithful One?
- **Answer#2: Because Jesus is the committed One**
- Has Jesus been committed to this role as Savior since before Adam’s fall?
- TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:9 NASB
- Let’s begin with reading verse 8

*“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus... .”*

- He is the faithful One, because he is the committed One to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light through the gospel! AMEN
- What else makes Jesus the faithful One?
- **Answer #3: Because Jesus is the eternal One**
- Has Jesus existed before coming to this earth?
- Let’s listen in to Moses and his prayer in Psalm 90
- TEXT: Psalm 90:2 NASB

*“Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”*

- In Jesus’ visit with the Jewish throng in John 8, they asked “Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?” (v.53)
- Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!” (v.58)
- What else makes Jesus the faithful One?
- **Answer #4: Because Jesus is the suffering One**
- Here is where the faithful One and the selfish one meet
- I wonder, have you met the selfish one lately?
- You and I were doing this again this morning when we awoke—there is none righteous, no not one (Rom. 3)
- Let me illustrate

### III. Application

## A. Story—Cuban Olympic Volleyball team

- Early one July morning, before anyone else was up, Mireya Luis put on her sweats, crept out of her dormitory room at Olympic Village in Atlanta and made her way to the phone banks
- She had to do something her teammates could never know about
- 900 miles away, in a modest farmhouse on the outskirts of the Cuban city of Camagüey, an old woman named Catalina picked up the receiver. “Hello?”
- At first there was silence on the line—then came the sniffles, then heaving sobs
- Mireya, the youngest of Catalina’s nine children, was tall and slim with wide-set almond shaped eyes
- When Mireya was a child, Catalina watched her spend hours practicing her leaps in the yard by trying to pluck fruit from the mango trees
- Reluctantly, Catalina allowed her daughter to leave home to join the national volleyball team in Havana at 16
- Now, at 29, her daughter, sobbing on the other end of the line, was a national celebrity
- On this July morning in Atlanta though, Luis called her mother, feeling homesick and demoralized
- The Cubans had spent many grueling months in Japan training against teams in that country’s professional league
- And the Castro regime had decided to not allow them to play professionally abroad after the Olympics
- So when they discovered this, the women had put more time into getting their hair done at the salon than training
- They sleepwalked through a pair of lopsided losses to Russian and Brazil and were in danger of even making it past the knockout round
- Mireya had been keeping a secret from her teammates, as their captain
- Her knee, which had been surgically repaired a few years earlier was badly swollen—so she was doubting how effective she could be on the court
- After she had poured her heart out on the phone—there was no response
- For a second, she thought her mother might be confused about who was calling
- “Mom,” she said, “Is everything okay?”
- After a long pause, Catalina said, “The people of Cuba are doing very badly!”
- “Yes, I know, but...”
- “Listen here,” Catalina said. “I didn’t give birth to a daughter so she could go and cry in front of her adversary. And don’t go to the hairdresser anymore, because I saw you changed your hair. You went to Atlanta to play volleyball, not to get your hair groomed?”
- Catalina offered Mireya some tactical advice for the next match and then she hung up
- Mireya Luis dabbed her eyes, tried to calm herself, as she didn’t want her teammates to see her upset
- Her mother’s message couldn’t have been clearer—
  - a. She hadn’t raised a quitter

- b. Luis was part of something larger than she was
- c. She had to control her emotions
- d. There was no choice but to find a way to pull her team through this
- Let me pause in the midst of this story to step back for a moment—what we say and model to our children or fellow human beings carries either the divine or human stamp
- Be very careful which stamp you are leaving—because the faithful One becomes the suffering One if we’re not careful
- Jesus once remarked, “I tell you the truth, the extent that you did not or did, you did it not *or* did it to Me.” (Matt. 25:45b)
- The Cuban women’s volleyball team found their groove and brushed aside the inferior U.S. team to advance
- Their semifinal opponent, Brazil was the only team they genuinely feared
- The two teams once been friends, sneaking out to eat and enjoy each other’s company
- The most recent World Championships in São Paulo had left their relationship in tatters
- When the Cubans had humiliated their old friends in straight sets, the Brazilian players wouldn’t even make eye contact as they made their customary lines and passed each other
- So, in their group stage match in Atlanta, the Brazilians had returned the favor wiped them off the court in straight sets
- Mireya Luis remarked, “It was time for extreme measures...we were past strategies. It was fundamental—we were out for victory at any cost.”
- I am talk about the selfish one—that selfish one in each one of us
- What is there that you want—that
  - A. You would sacrifice anything to have it
  - B. You would even sacrifice honor, respect, decency, in order to achieve it
- The Cuban team had always thrived on animosity
- The more hostile the crowd, the better they played
- Luis did not believe the Brazilians possess the same mental toughness
- “We knew we could get to them... .”
- “They’re very passionate about their volleyball, with a strong character, but at the same time, they are very weak. No, wait...Not weak. Sensitive.”
- Luis held a players-only meeting to reveal her plan
- She wanted her teammates to offend the Brazilians during the match—to shower them with insults
- Volleyball teams, which play face-to-face, have long used psychological tricks to gain an advantage—glares, shouts, smirks, the occasional pointing of a finger
- Luis believed it was time to take this strategy to a new level
- The match began and Luis pulled out her script and her teammates followed

- What ensued would become one of the most hotly contested women’s matches ever!
- The Cuban strategy succeeded, but at what a cost—
  - a. Police had to be called into the tunnel approaching the locker rooms
  - b. Players fought and had to be separated
  - c. The Cuban players were not able to leave till 3 a.m. in the morning
  - d. Not until the last Brazilian fan had left
- One Brazilian player put it plainly, “They (speaking of the Cuban team) got what they wanted.”
- What is it that our selfish hearts want?
- We the selfish ones are—
  1. **The blaming one**
  2. **The taking one**
  3. **The shaming one**
  4. **The heartless one**

**IV. Close**

- I have news for you and me—he is the faithful One, he took the body prepared for him, he met the selfish one, and laid down his life for each of these things we are, that we might become as he is!
- V. Prayer** – Faithful One, so unchanging, please change us, renew us, one selfish trait at a time. Miyera Luis and her team’s story reminds us of our story. When you promised in times everlasting to come, you knew we had no chance without you. Please, help us to not run from you, but rather to you, Lord. With arms wide open, you are waiting. AMEN