

## **Dwelling, Glory, Grace and Truth**

### **[Deeper Sheet 1.25.09]**

God has always been about being near people. We're told in Genesis that God walked in the garden, and shortly after Adam and Eve had taken the forbidden fruit, God asked a question that has echoed down through the ages: "Where are you?" As they left Egypt, God's presence hovered over Israel. In the wilderness, God was present at the tent of meeting. Later, the tent of meeting gave way to the temple as the place of God's presence. Later still, God would choose to be among us by taking on flesh—Immanuel, or God with us: Jesus. And we anticipate the day when God's dwelling will be with us permanently. Make no mistake, God is relentless about being with us.

In the flesh, God experienced what it was to be human. And in that sense God became familiar with what it is to be a human. Jesus had a body, and it probably ached. Jesus had a mind and a heart and he wept at the death of his friend. He wept at what would happen to Jerusalem. He experienced pain. You might even say that Jesus knew the experience of longing for God in the darkest moment only to find that God wasn't around. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" If anyone knows what hurts within us, what it is to be human, it is Jesus.

None of this sounds particularly glorious. How can the Son of God, the King of the Universe, gain glory by becoming human and being tortured and killed? The heavens declare the glory of God. The majesty of stars—that's glory. The *shekinah*, which is the overwhelming light of God's presence, is glory. And yet, the Scriptures tell us that it is human flesh that best represents God's glory. We have been made in the image of God and bear his glory. Glory shines, but glory also bleeds. Maybe glory is bigger than we thought.

The light and blood of God's glory has been revealed to us in the face of Jesus. And in the face of Jesus we see a face that is familiar, a face that knows what it means to be human, but we also see a face that is unfamiliar. This face reveals to us what it looks like for grace and truth to break into our world here and now, and it makes us long to become the kind of people who allow the grace and truth of Jesus to take root in our hearts and lives.

Think about the statement that God is relentless about being with us. How have you experienced that to be true?

What experiences have you had that have caused you to doubt this?

Describe what it is like or has been like for you to experience God's nearness and presence.

Why do you think it is so significant that Jesus knows what it means to be human?

How do you feel about the idea that mocking another human is to diminish God's glory?

The combination of grace and truth is rare. It's the capacity to tell the truth with love. When have you seen that done well?

What relationships or situations in your life currently need to experience both grace and truth?

What might it look like for grace and truth to show up at the same time in those relationships and situations?