

Let me first wish all the mothers (and grandmas and great grandmas) a very happy Mothers' Day! This morning I put a quick post on Facebook which should get me some interesting comments. In Genesis 1:27 it says that G-d made man in His own image and that He made them male and female, which means that both genders equally reflect the image of G-d. In fact some of my favourite passages about the love and compassion of G-d describe Him as our mother. I am not going to get all weird and talk about some kind of mother goddess but I just want to let you ladies know that the stubborn love and great compassion you showed to your children (and grandchildren and great grandchildren) is one of the most faithful and poignant reflections of the love of G-d. Thank you for showing so much love. My own mother passed away in 1999 and I still think of her and miss her.

I got my title this morning from a book written by Francis Shaeffer where he said that G-d is there and He is not silent. When I was an undergraduate student at the University of Calgary he was one of the main speakers at a L'Abri Conference. These are advertised as places of retreat or shelter where people seek honest answers about G-d and the meaning of human life. I enjoyed listening to him and it gave me greater confidence both to seek answers about G-d and also to confront challenges to His existence, even in the face of all the gobbledegook which our secular, evolutionary society spews out because He is there and He is not silent.

As long as I have been in ministry, I have sought for ways to help people understand their faith and for them to be able to explain what they believe in a darkening relativistic world which is trying to move biblical faith from the endangered species list to the extinct species list. People sometimes ask me if G-d is real, why does He not speak out more forcefully and proclaim the truth and wonder of His existence more clearly.

In answer to this, I came up with what I call the five C's which do proclaim forcefully and clearly that He is there and that He is not silent. I took each of the "C's from various Scripture passages, but mainly from five which I would like to read to you.

(1) Ps. 19:1-4 (2) Pr. 1:20-23 (3) Rom. 1:18-20 (4) Rom. 2:14-16 (5) Heb. 4:12, 13

Each of these passages refers to the witnesses or testimonies from G-d and I made them all begin with a "C" to make them easier to remember.

The first one is the cosmos, which is a flawless machine, governed by unchangeable laws and which is moving in an irreversible direction. There is no chaos and nothing in the universe ever happens by chance or by accident. Scientists call the origin of the universe a mystery and have created the modern mythology of the Big Bang Theory, which is a theory with no evidence and with no explanation as to what caused this supposed event.

The Bible very simply and very poetically says that G-d is the creator of the cosmos and it declares His glory because it is an orderly and infinite witness to His being and His reality.

The second one is conscience, which is that part of our make up which divides the world into good and evil and has a homing beacon which cries out to discover meaning and purpose from a very early age - before the spiritual infection of the world conspires to corrupt it.

The third is **culture**, and here I talk about the seeds which G-d sowed into every culture at Babel, so that they would recognize the truth when it was proclaimed to them. You see, there are six common characteristics in every religion which form a collective homing beacon back to the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and our Saviour, the Messiah of promise. Here they are briefly. Every religion has (1) a creation, (2) a fall, (3) a redemption, (4) an end of the world, (5) life after death (judgment) and (6) a spiritual duty based on the first five.

This does not mean that all religions are true, just that all of them contain redemptive analogies or seed concepts which function as spiritual homing beacons and openings to the Gospel and to the Bible when it is shared with them.

The fourth is **circumstance**, which speaks of the ultimate control of G-d over the events of our lives. This does not mean that all the atrocities and foolishness of mankind are His will. It does mean He gives sin a limited shelf life and speaks out to mankind by the set of circumstances which He uses to bring each of us to Himself. So I see mankind as divided into two three distinct groups.

There are first those who walk with G-d (believers). There are next those who are walking towards G-d (the seekers). Finally, there are those who are running away from G-d (the lost). None of these groups is able to change who G-d is or stop Him from doing what He does. When I talk to people about my faith, I listen to discover what G-d is doing in their lives to see if I can help this process move them from group three to group two to group one.

Lastly, there is the **canon** of the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments. This is a diary of the Jewish people which explains both who G-d is, how He works and what His expectations of us are. It is a book of comfort and conviction and while it does not try to prove G-d, it does speak with power and clarity to let us learn as much about G-d as He will let us learn and nothing which it says contradicts anything which we see in the universe around us.

There are limits to what it teaches - and it contains mysteries (ideas so big that the hard drive of our heads would explode if we tried to think them in this life) which He is unwilling to share with us (Deut. 29:29). It speaks of His Laws and the consequences of keeping them or violating them and it is the single greatest guide to spirituality and the meaning of life. It has no equals among the other supposedly holy books, only competitors and imitators.

Again, this is because nothing it teaches contradicts the **cosmos**, nothing it teaches undermines the conscience and everything it teaches enriches every **culture** it touches. Further, it gives meaning and purpose to the **circumstances** which happen in our lives and in the lives of all the generations and nations of mankind. It is the **canon** to measure the validity of authentic spirituality and it pulls together and empowers the first four "C"s.

Here they are again: Cosmos. Conscience. Culture. Circumstance. Canon. He is there and He is not silent. Which group do you belong to? Are you walking with Him? Are you walking towards Him? Or do you belong to that noisy, senseless crowd which is running away from Him and are making as much noise about it as they can in as many ways as they can?

He does not reveal all of His secrets to believers, just His love so that our lives can be filled with meaning and purpose and so that even in the midst of great tragedy or great joy we can discover our spiritual duty and not feel lost as we wander through the valleys of life towards

our Father's Home in Glory. He alone holds the solution to society's growing spiritual confusion.

I was 19 when I came to faith - actually I returned to faith and I have discovered the answer to the meaning of life. Walking with Him and His five "C"s keeps me from losing my way as I manoeuvre through the crowds of those who are running away from Him and spewing all kinds of nonsense. And I am always on the lookout for those in this crowd who are swimming against the current as they begin to walk towards G-d, like blind men groping their way through spiritual darkness to the light in which our G-d and Saviour dwells.

What we believe about G-d and about the origin of the cosmos and the meaning of life does not change anything about G-d, the cosmos or even about the meaning of life. We are living in an increasingly post Judeo-Christian world where what is considered right and what is considered wrong and what is believed to be true is becoming increasingly hostile to any form of biblical spirituality. People are losing their spiritual grip on reality.

When I begin to wonder what G-d is up to in all of this, I remember the five "C"s and do a personal system check to make sure that I am listening to what He is saying and filling my heart with the meaning and purpose of life as He describes it. And so that I can fulfil my spiritual duty and not be pulled away from the group who are walking with Him, no matter how hard the group which is running away from Him tries to intimidate me and undermine my faith.

Happy Mothers' Day and may each of you grow in the strength and grace and knowledge which is found in our blessed Messiah and Saviour, Yeshua (Jesus) of Nazareth, the King of the Jews and the King of the nations. And may you always listen to what He is saying and never lose sight of the meaning and purpose He wants to accomplish through your life.

Listen to the cosmos. Listen to your conscience. Find the answers to the questions He has built into culture. Learn to respond to what He is doing in your life through circumstance and learn to measure the truth and validity of the first four "C"s according to the canon of the Scriptures. If you do this you will never lose your way or be pulled into the spiritual confusion which is doing its best to undermine and undo the spiritual and moral fabric of our society worldwide.

Shalom.