

Some months ago in his sermon, a Vicar explained that he had recently been criticised about his preaching. "All you ever go on about is Jesus!" his critics were telling him.

Not surprisingly the Vicar was rather upset. He reacted indignantly by asking, "How can we ever have too much Jesus?". "Quite so", was the general reaction of his listeners.

For Jesus is of course the Pivot, through whom God the Father conducts all His dealings with this, His creation. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the Good Shepherd, the bread of life, the light of the world, the true vine. Jesus is the Son of God, and the Son of Man. It is Jesus who is the one Mediator between God and man; it is Jesus who gave Himself as a ransom for all (I Timothy 2.5).

In the light of this sample of His titles and role, how ever could we have "too much Jesus"?

To answer that, we must look to the example of the Lord Jesus Himself throughout the Gospels.

On the one hand, the Lord Jesus is always entirely at home with who He is - the Son of God, the Anointed One, the Messiah. He accepts without quibble the worship of those around Him. He teaches with natural authority, causing surprise and wonder amongst His hearers. He lets rip at the religious hypocrites around Him, who had come to dominate the spiritual scene with their dead rules and home-made regulations. He speaks honestly and fearlessly in any company - be it to the crowds, the Pharisees, the Sanhedrin, Pilate or Herod.

But notice! Notice that He never speaks of Himself as being "the end", "the ultimate", "the last word". Jesus is effortlessly "centre-stage" throughout His life, but He is never in the business of "hogging the limelight" for Himself.

For Jesus' whole attention is focussed, not on Himself, not on the folk around Him - but on His heavenly Father. Throughout His Gospel years Jesus always regards Himself as the obedient Son, fulfilling the wishes and directions of God His Father. Jesus is there to look to, to seek, to listen, to understand, to respond, and to put into practice what His Father wishes.

See the way that in Gethsemane, the Lord is wholly honest with His Father, with words to the effect - "Father, I don't want to go on with this - please get me out of this - but nevertheless, let your will prevail rather than mine" (based on Matthew 26. 26 - 46 and parallels). We see in these words of Jesus not the slightest hint of, "Oh aren't I great, just all look at Me"! That notion is a nonsense to Him.

Rather, His whole concern is to give full glory to His Father (see for example Jesus' prayer given for us in John 17). Yes, Jesus is the vital Pivot within this

creation, and yes, He is of course entitled to receive our praise and worship and thanksgiving. But He is always the first one to point us past Himself, through Himself, via Himself, onwards into fellowship with God our heavenly Father.

Jesus is the first to insist that He Himself is not the End of the Road. Instead, as Jesus shows us Himself, it is Almighty God our heavenly Father who is the ultimate End of the Road for all of creation.

As such, it is our heavenly Father, and not the Lord Jesus, who is the rightful recipient of our ultimate attention - and that focus is entirely in accord with the wishes and example of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Our privilege as God's redeemed children is to come by faith, *through* our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the power of God the Holy Spirit, into the presence of God our heavenly Father. (See Romans 5.1-2).

So can we have ever "too much Jesus"?

Yes we can, if in our love for Jesus we inadvertently neglect Almighty God our heavenly Father, for He it is who is truly the "End of the Road".

But at the same time, No, we can never have too much Jesus, as long as the more we look to Jesus, the more we look through Jesus - at His bidding - to His and our heavenly Father beyond.

Isaiah 40.28-31 - and all through the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Glory be to God indeed!