

Brothers and sisters,

Let's briefly review. We've seen that in the beginning, the good God created everything that exists, the highlight of which is the human person. You are his favorite creature, made to become like him. In response to this, our first parents allowed themselves to be deceived into rebelling against God, unleashing a series of tragic consequences into the world, with the low point of being sold into slavery to the very one who despises us and wants nothing more than to use and abuse us, preventing us from receiving the glory God intended for us. At this point in the story, our situation is hopeless.

I think this is all good information to know, because it can help us understand a bit more about what Jesus had in mind when he came to earth. So often we can emphasize Jesus's gentleness, patience, kindness, and love. These are all characteristics worth emphasizing, to be sure, but this context can help us to see another side of Jesus that we don't talk about as much. Jesus came to fight a war. God's favorite creature had been captured, and Jesus came to rescue us: *"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3:8b). Jesus puts it this way: *"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil"* (Luke 12: 21-22). Jesus comes into the palace (earth) of the strong man (the devil), assails him and overcomes him, and then takes his goods (us). Do we think about Jesus in this way? Do we consider that on the cross, Jesus is going to war and routes the enemy by his resurrection?

Jesus comes to earth to pick a fight, but he knows that the devil is a smart creature. The devil, being a creature, knows he cannot win against God, and wouldn't fight against God. So, Jesus takes on a human nature and comes, as it were, in disguise. He blends in with his environment, appearing to be just another man. The devil, seeking to destroy every man, goes after Jesus and seeks to put him to death. Jesus, the Light of the world, enters into the devil's kingdom of death and darkness. This is his moment to shine. In that moment, Jesus reveals himself to be God incarnate and so publicly humiliates the enemy of our race. The very one who deceived us into rebelling against God has now himself been deceived. He has been defeated, his kingdom has been defeated! Jesus rises from the dead and offers new life to those who believe in him and follow his ways. We have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness, sin, and death into the kingdom of light, freedom, and life. Incredible! Why would he do such a thing? The answer is very simple, but very powerful: You matter to him. You are that valuable.

Jesus is indeed gentle, loving, kind, and patient. But he is so much more than that. He is utterly unconquerable, the greatest of all time. No one can compete with him and he will reign as King of the Universe for all time and into eternity! The glory of our God is unbeatable! He takes that glory and directs it all toward you, as he says, *"You're worth the trouble."*

May the Lord give you his peace!
Fr. Bryan