CHRIST’S HEART FOR HIS PEOPLE

WHEATON, Ill.—It can be easy for Christians to describe who Jesus was and what he did: he is the Savior; he taught parables; he had twelve disciples; and he died, was resurrected, and now sits in heaven with God the Father. But when asked about what Christ’s heart is like, the answers aren’t as easy. Many Christians tend to think that Christ tolerates them on some level or that he is disappointed with them. But what does the Bible say about the heart of Christ for his people?

In his new book, Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers (Crossway, April 2020), author Dane Ortlund reminds Christians that Christ’s heart is just that: gentle and lowly. “We naturally think of Jesus touching us the way a little boy reaches out to touch a slug for the first time—face screwed up, cautiously extending an arm, giving a yelp of disgust upon contact, and instantly withdrawing. We picture the risen Christ approaching us with ‘a severe and sour disposition,’ as Thomas Goodwin says,” writes Ortlund. “The God revealed in the Scripture deconstructs our intuitive predilections and startles us with one whose infinitude of perfections is matched by his infinitude of gentleness. Indeed, his perfections include his perfect gentleness. It is who he is. It is his very heart.”

Gentle and Lowly counters many false assumptions about the heart of Christ for his people:

- He is not burdened or lessened in any way by the sins and sufferings of his people; rather, he delights when they come to him in their failures
- His heart is not “far off and distant” now that he is in heaven
- The deeper our sin, the deeper his gentleness
- He will love his people until the end, because he cannot bear to do otherwise

By knowing Christ’s heart for his people, Christians will understand more deeply that the gospel is more than just legal exoneration; rather it “also sweeps us into Christ’s very heart.” This knowledge changes and calms how believers live the Christian life.

“The battle of the Christian life is bringing your own heart into alignment with Christ’s; that is, getting up each morning and replacing your natural orphan-mindset with a mindset of full and free adoption into the family of God through the work of Christ your older brother, who loved you and gave himself for you out of the overflowing fullness of his gracious heart,” writes Ortlund.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dane C. Ortlund (PhD, Wheaton College) is chief publishing officer and Bible publisher at Crossway. He serves as an editor for the Knowing the Bible series and the Short Studies in Biblical Theology series, and is the author of several books, including *Edwards on the Christian Life*.

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