

HAVE YOU LOST THE WONDER?

Text: Mark 9:36, 37; Mark 10:13, 14; Isaiah 11:6

Let us take the child-like qualities that so impressed our Lord and seek the wonder that we may have lost.

God's Word says, "Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it...I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. (Psalm 139:3-6, 14).

Someone asked the famed British evangelist Gypsy Smith, "What is the secret of your longevity in service to Christ?" The evangelist who was then in his eighties replied, "I have never lost the wonder!" Have we lost the child-like wonder of appreciating God for who He is and the great things He has done, from making flowers, to giving us a sunrise every day? Above all, have we lost the wonder of being saved by the miraculous, undeserved grace of the true and Living God? Have we lost the wonder that the precious blood of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ is the price that purchased our redemption? Have we lost the wonder that this same Lord rose bodily from the grave and lives forevermore at the right hand of the Father, and wonder of all wonders - He lives in us, giving us the very hope of glory? My late friend, song-writer Al Smith was so impressed with Gypsy Smith's words that he wrote a song entitled, "I Have Never Lost the Wonder of it All."

When our youngest, Sean Patrick was a little tike, his t-ball coach placed him in left field. He was totally oblivious to the game and was picking some Texas wild flowers with child-like wonder. I remember being torn; I wanted him to get involved in the game and play to win, however, how can you scold a boy who sees the beauty of God's creation more impressive than a mere ball game?

G. K. Chesterton said, "Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we."

After the successful presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, this old lion took his son Kermit and decided to go where no North American explorer had gone before, into the deep forbidden places of South America. It very nearly cost him his life. When asked why he would take such a venture, he replied, "It's my last chance to be a boy." An old Mennonite said, "We are too soon old and too late smart."

Have we lost the wonder of:

1. CREATION

Psalms 19:1-4. Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead...."

Think of this; there are at least 350 billion galaxies that science knows of... and still counting! A famous theologian said, "Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their own insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God." The Earth's atmosphere is 77% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, with traces of argon, carbon dioxide and water. If that mixture had altered at all, life would be prohibited on planet earth.

How can we not look up into the starry sky without wonder? It is mind boggling to say the least, but let us consider not only the macro universe above us, but consider the micro universe around us.

The genius scientist George Washington Carver one day prayed, "Dear Mr. Creator, please tell me what the universe was made for." The Great Creator answered, "You want to know too much for that little mind of yours. Ask for something more your size." Then he asked, "Dear Mr. Creator tell me what man was made for." Again the Great Creator replied, "Little man, you are still asking too much. Cut down the extent of your request and improve the intent." So then he asked, "Please, Mr. Creator, will you tell me why the peanut was made?" George Washington Carver was used of God to virtually save the agricultural south with finding no less than 300 uses of the lowly peanut! Carver was undoubtedly a deeply devoted Christian. He attributed the inspiration of his work to God and his studies of nature convinced him of the existence and benevolence of the Creator: "Never since have I been without this consciousness of the Creator speaking to me....The out of doors has been to me more and more a great cathedral in which God could be continuously spoken to and heard from."

In 1956 George Beverly Shea wrote these words and put them to music: "There's the wonder of sunset at evening. The wonder as sunrise I see; But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul is the wonder that God loves me. There's the wonder of springtime and harvest; the sky, the stars, the sun; but the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul is the wonder that's only begun. Oh, the wonder of it all, the wonder of it all just to think that God loves me!"

2. CRUCIFIXION

The greatest motivation in my life to live the Christian life is my life-long meditation of what the Lord Jesus did on the cross for you and me. Isaiah 53:6 declares, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Picking up on Isaiah's prophecy the Spirit of the Lord inspired Peter to write in I Peter 2:22-24, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Many years ago a large group of people were taking a train trip. It was most uncomfortable. The train was hot and it was crowded. Everyone was complaining; everyone, that is, except a gentleman sitting by a window in rapt wonder. Every so often the man would exclaim, "Wonderful, wonderful!" Finally one of the complaining passengers spoke up and questioned the man, "Why do you keep saying, "Wonderful, wonderful?" The man joyously gave this answer, "Up until a few days ago, I was blind; I could not see anything. But a great doctor restored my eyesight and now I can see. What is ordinary to you, is out of this world to me." Anna Russell wrote these words, "Wonderful, wonderful Jesus, In the heart He implanteth a song: A song of deliverance, of courage, of strength, In the heart He implanteth a song."

3. COMMUNICATION

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace..." (Hebrews 4:14a, 16a). Because of our Lord's death, burial and resurrection, we are not only privileged, but commanded to pray. Yet, how many of us are exhausting or even challenging ourselves to come before this throne of grace?

Psalm 34:8 says, "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." Imagine working in a bakery and losing your taste for bread. Many a tailor dresses in rags while making elegant clothes for others. A. J. Gordon once preached that many of God's people had grown cold and indifferent like the statues in the town square, with water gushing out of their mouths, but tasting none of it.

The Bible says in Genesis 24:63, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming." This verse speaks to my heart, reminding me that wonderful things come

to those who prayerfully open their hearts to commune with the Lord. For Isaac, it was a bride. What does God have waiting for you if you would simply pray?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.