

(For Monday, January 30, 2017) **Do you realize the lengths God has gone to in order to really know us?**

“You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?”
(Ps56:8 – ESV)

I love the imagery of this verse, how our tears are so precious to God that he actually keeps them in a bottle. For me, this is one of the reasons why the Incarnation of Our Lord had to happen. In his glorified, pre-incarnate form God was omnipotent, omniscient, and ubiquitous. But for him to really identify with the pain and suffering that his human children endure, he had to become one of us and undergo the most horrible agony imaginable, the way of his Cross. The Italians have a saying that goes “Devi provarla sulla propria pelle.” It means that to really understand something, you “have to try it out on your own skin.” And that’s exactly what Jesus did, just so that he could truly become one with us.

Can you imagine that kind of love? And can you imagine being loved with that kind of devotion?
Well, you are!

(For Tuesday, January 31, 2017) **Is there something you need to jettison to reach your full potential?**

“Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.” (Is.52:11 – ESV)

When people commit their lives fully to The Lord, they are often required to make dramatic changes in their established routines. When a man or woman finds God and makes a commitment to follow Him as Lord and Savior, that usually means terminating some relationships that might keep that new Christian from fulfilling his/her complete calling as a Child of God. The Bible is full of examples of people who were required, just like Abraham, to set out on a journey to an unknown destination, leaving behind much of their former lives. It’s human nature to want to cling to the comfortable and the familiar in this life. But so much of growing into our true identity as God’s people means leaving behind all those things that impede us from full Christian maturity.

Is God calling you to leave behind anything so that you can grow into the person He wants you to be?

(For Wednesday, February 1, 2017) **Are you living your life as a child of the promise?**

“Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.” (Gal.4:28 – ESV)

To be a child of the promise means to be a citizen of the Kingdom which has been promised to us. It also means to be a child of the New Covenant, a promise God has made to save us for eternity. It means to be a child no longer living under the bondage of a crushing law, but in the abundant freedom that comes through God’s promise of grace. All these things are given to us through our identity as Children of the Living God. There is certainly no such thing as “works salvation.” No matter how hard we try, we could never work hard enough to gain by our own merit and strength a place in God’s Kingdom. But we can and must live our lives so as to display to all who are watching our joyous faith in the promises that God has made to his much-loved children.

Are you living your life so that others may witness your faith in the promises of Love’s Lord?

(For Thursday, February 2, 2017) **Is God working in your life exactly like you think he should? If so, something's wrong!**

"And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him." (Mk.8:30 – ESV)

As I was listening to a respected scientist talk about the origins of the universe on NPR last week, he mentioned that the universe is really very counterintuitive. (See also <http://www.wfdd.org/story/ask-quantum-mechanic>) My take-away here is that if you think God is acting more or less like you think he should, something's wrong. Because God almost never acts like we think he should. When Peter confesses the true nature of Christ, Jesus instructs the Disciples not to tell anyone. (See also Mt.16:20; Mk.9:21) Now where's the logic in that? One of the reasons for these strange instructions from the Lord about keeping his identity secret (for the moment) is so that God can reveal the real identity of his Son through the Resurrection of Easter Day. At any rate, since mankind is so inept at saving himself, then if God were constantly acting the way people think he should, how could He possibly save the world?

Isn't it wonderful that God's ways are so inscrutable? (See Rom.11:33)

(For Friday, February 3, 2017) **Are you still wonder-struck about the Resurrection?**

"So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean." (Mk.9:10 – ESV)

Many journeys to the Cross actually begin with questions being asked by people who initially are not at all convinced of God's existence. Only by a gradual process of growth and reflection do these people become Believers.. I'm so grateful that after the glorification of Jesus in his Transfiguration, Peter and his friends still felt the need to wonder about what all this really meant. The Christian faith is not a Gnostic practice where some secret knowledge known only to a select few will render people enlightened members worthy of inclusion. Instead we Christians have surely beheld the presence of God's glory and know Him for who he is. But we are still called on a daily basis to wonder, and reflect, and read, and pray about who God is truly becoming in our lives and in our world. Even in his maturity, Paul still felt the need to work out his salvation in fear and trembling (See Phil.2:12)

What about you? Are you still reflecting on what rising from the dead means in your life? I know I am!