

Merry Christmas

A Holiday Message to All from All of Us

What Sea World and a Barn Have in Common

*"The greatest enemy of the spiritual life is inattention or drowsiness."
(Blaise Pascal, 1623-1662)*

There is a longing for the glory of God built into each one of us like a jack-in-the-box that presses for release. We want to see splendor, to behold beauty, to witness wonder. Yet we are seldom in direct touch with this yearning of our soul, covering it with amusements, obsessions, and distractions of every sort.

When we do attempt to satisfy this hunger, we often look in the wrong places. We chase the "glory-cloud" across town or to the next service or in some extraordinary experience, when all along God's glory is performed right before our eyes.

Author Frederick Buechner writes of an incident that took place in Orlando, Florida, while he was a tourist at Sea World: "It was a gorgeous day....The bleachers where we sat were packed....At a given signal they released into the tank five or six killer whales....and they went racing around and around in circles. With the dazzle of sky and sun, the beautiful young people on the platform, the soft southern air, and the crowds all around us watching the performance....it was as if the whole creation—men and women and beasts and sun and water and earth and sky and, for all I know, God himself—was caught up in one great, jubilant dance of unimaginable beauty. And then, right in the midst of it, I was astonished to find that my eyes were filled with tears."

Buechner's wife and daughter felt a similar rush of emotion. He later reflected: "We shed tears because we had caught a glimpse of the...Kingdom, and it had almost broken our hearts. For a few minutes, we had seen Eden and been a part of the great dance that goes on at the heart of creation. We shed tears because we were given a glimpse of the way life was created to be."

God's greatness is everywhere. As Gerard Manley Hopkins declares, the world is "charged with the grandeur of God." Holy sparks are flying all around us. We must not casually pass over His presence.

Interestingly, God especially delights in using the most ordinary circumstances to manifest His glory. Remember the good news given to the shepherds by the angel? *"And this will be a sign for you; You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger"* (Luke 2:12). God in baby-form....in a barn....in a feeding trough. It doesn't get much more ordinary.

We need to pay attention. This is a God-bathed world and His handprints are all around us.

So whether you are at Sea World or in a barn, on a cruise in the Caribbean or bowling at Clover Lanes, be on the lookout for God. He shows up in the most unlikely of places.

The Earth is filled with the Lord's Glory!
~ Jeff ~

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Kelly Dabson Photography

EARTH
with her thousand voices, praises God
~Samual Taylor Coleridge~

LIFE Challenge

of Southeastern Michigan

17667 Pierson
Detroit, Michigan
48219
313-531-0111
www.lifechallengesemi.org

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

from our family to yours!

