

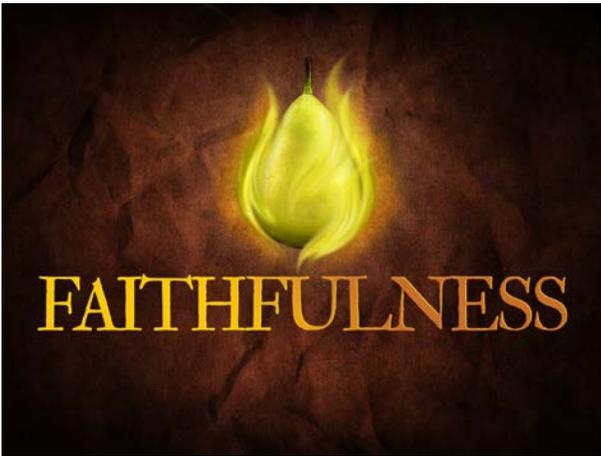
Remain Faithful

Mark 13:1–8

Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many.

When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

November 15, 2015



Two Thoughts for the Week



Cross an ocean, and go back in time to the 19th century, and we meet with a teacher, and a student. The teacher's name was Edward Kimball, and he was a Sunday school instructor at Boston's prestigious Mount Vernon Congregational Church. One day, he met a student who had as many rough edges as he might ever hope to see. That student's name was Dwight Moody.

Just 17, young Moody had left his family's farm to find work in Boston. As Edward Kimball discovered, his new student could read haltingly at best, and had no idea how to find a verse in the Bible. Yet this Sunday School class was the place where Moody, later the most famous preacher of the late 19th century, began to understand the things of God.

Kimball was a man of tact and sensitivity. As Moody recalled, "I was assigned to a Bible class with some students from Harvard College....They said the lesson was in John, and handed me a Bible. What did I know about John?"

Taking the Bible, Moody began searching through its first pages, instead of going to the New Testament. "Those Harvard students," Moody said, "began to nudge one another and whisper—*greenhorn from the country*." Moody thought: "What a fool I am to be caught in this scrape."

Kimball saw this, and gave the Harvard students a hasty glance of reproof. Then, as he remembered, "I quietly handed Moody my own Bible, open at the right place, and took his." Dwight Moody never forgot that kindness, nor could he ever forget the best gift Edward Kimball ever bestowed.

As Moody said: "One day my teacher came around behind the counter of the shop I was at work in, put his hand upon my shoulder, and talked to me about Christ. . . . I was brought into the Kingdom of God."

Kimball's plea was one of simple, timeless truth. He told young Moody "of Christ's love for him, and the love Christ wanted in return." He spoke from the heart. As Moody listened, he saw tears in Kimball's eyes. "He talked to me about Christ, and my soul," Moody said later. "I had not felt I had a soul till then." Something of eternal moment kindled. And there, in the back of a shoe store, Dwight Moody "gave himself, and his life, to Christ." What price do you place on that?



The family sat around and let the afternoon sun rest on their shoulders. It's quiet except for the cicadas. The two older boys are at school, and their middle son is with a friend. It's just the two smaller boys with Mom. Grandpa brought a big box of fresh peaches, and they each have one. They're ripe and ready and juice runs down the boys' forearms and dribbles from their chins.

Soon one son hits the middle of his peach, and he places the seed on his outstretched hand. He

peers at the craggy and brown surface.

"It's neat," he says, "how God makes the fruit for our food. But that's also what protects the seed."

The other son takes the seed into his own hand. His palm is stretched open now, and they poke and prod until what was once hidden grows warm from the sun. The boys chatter about fruit and trees and creation and God.

And for a moment, they're lost in this child-like wonder. The Mom longs for this ability to see something, consider it and as easy-as-breath, give glory to the Lord.

For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands. (Psalm 92:4, NIV)

The Mom muses, in this life we run hard and fast. There are commitments, responsibilities, things to do and places to go. Rather than enjoying the moment the Lord has given us, I wonder and worry about how I'm going to accomplish the next 10 things on my list.

Yet the Lord is faithful to beckons her out of her distraction. And so today she is called by the give-God-the-glory, simple-wonder of a child.

"It's a cool thing, the way God works," a son says. He and his brother decide to put the peach seed in a Ziploc baggie with hopes of seeing something grow. They rush off for paper towels and water and a plastic bag. Their conversation is lost to the Mom as they pound down the patio steps and rush into their home. But their appreciation for God's handiwork stays with her.

If we let it, seeing and savoring God's Presence will change us from the inside, and we can trade busy, anxious thoughts for praise. It's fully possible. We just need to live slowly enough to see.

Help me to see Your wonder today, Lord. Let me live in Your Presence and give You glory for great things. Amen.



Prayer for Peace - Brazil



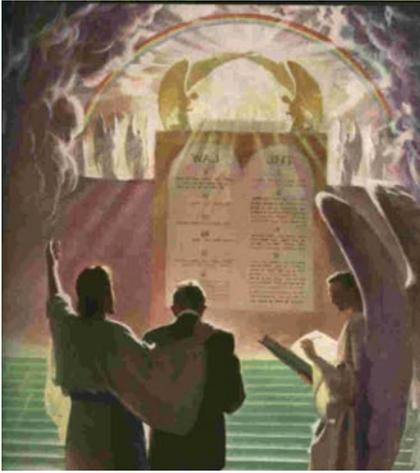
Divine Creator, fill us with your perfect love, which casts out fear, and binds us in sacred community as we learn of your peace and seek ways of sharing your peace with others.

O Compassionate One, forgive our sinful ways. Soften our hearts and remove the pride and prejudice which separate us from you and from one another.

We uphold for your blessing the nation and people of Brazil. May your grace enable us to see you in those who are impoverished and oppressed, and may our encounters with them transform both our attitudes toward life and the economic conditions in which they live. Through the power of your Spirit, may we have the courage to stand always on the side of your peace and your justice.

Use our hands, feet, voices and minds to help bring your kingdom closer to each person victimized by poverty, abuse and neglect, so all persons know their worth as your precious children and experience wholeness through your peace.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.



Stewardship Thought

“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” (Mark 13:26)

We will all have that day when we are standing before God and our life is played out like a movie.

When this happens and God asks each of us,
“What have you done with the gifts that I have given you?”
How will you respond?