

Christians in the World

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God is Here!

Thursday, March 31, 2014

I know God is always with us, but there is something personal about having Him accept an invitation to go with you somewhere.

On Sunday morning I invited Him to church. He sat between a dear lady named Alberta (she had no idea!) and me. I glanced HIS way during praise time, and HE was really into our music. HE sat with HIS hands clasped between HIS knees during the sermon on Matthew 13:31-33 (parables of mustard seed and yeast). I didn't look, but imagine Jesus glanced my way when the topic of mustard seeds came up. Again.

We were encouraged to be strong in our faith, to accept the challenge of becoming life-changers. I felt the impact of the words, and prayed that GOD would be among us, to fill the place with HIS holy presence. I HEARD (in my head) the thought – I am with you. I almost jumped out of my pew! While I had been using my imagination to make God seem more real, HE was doing what HE always does – standing close by.

You can say the words I heard were part of my imagination, but I will disagree. The experience was too startling and unexpected. Once I gained control of myself, I asked “God, was that really you?”

Warmth flowed through me, as though Jesus had reached over and gripped my hand. Does it matter if the words came from God or from my over-active imagination? God is with me.

Message received. I invited Jesus to church, and HE came. Have you ever invited Jesus to accompany you somewhere? Give it a try, and see how special it makes you feel. God might even talk to you in a voice you'll recognize!

Regina

Do We Really Need God?

Thursday, March 21, 2014

The youth minister at my church recently returned from a mission trip to Nicaragua. With an unstable political system, unsafe water, and food that will make you sick, God is counted on for survival. Group prayer happened often. Spontaneously. For example, the team was traveling down a dirt road in the middle of nowhere to a nowhere destination and the conversation went something like this:

Minister: Are we safe out here? I have to admit some anxiety.
Nicaraguan: You afraid? No problem, we pray.”

He stopped the truck and the team prayed, right there in the dirt. To be honest, spontaneous group prayer happens very seldom in my day-to-day life. After all, I have safe water, my food has been “approved” to eat, and policemen are here to help me, not shoot me.

I tend to forget that even though I work to purchase my daily bread, God laid the infrastructure that makes this possible. God created the nation that I live in, and the resources for the benefits I enjoy. God told the Israelites as long as they followed Him they would prosper.

Dear friends, God told us the same thing, and I fear for a similar outcome. Will we soon become another Nicaragua, our resources stripped for the benefit of others? Will our children learn Russian or Chinese instead of English? How long will God overlook our unfaithfulness?

Please pray RIGHT NOW for our country. We can have our own spontaneous group prayer, only on different sides of the computer. Never forget who provides our daily bread!

Regina

What's Your Version of Heaven?

Thursday, March 17, 2014

Recently I have been contemplating life and death. What will Heaven be like? I have my own imagined image.

First, *my Heaven* does not have streets of gold. I can't think of anything uglier. How about a lovely brick in herringbone? Nor is Heaven row after row of high-rises. How God will house all of us I have no idea, but it won't be in ugly tall buildings.

And there won't be mass-transit. No busses in Heaven, with sad, bored faces staring out the windows. I am counting on God to give me the ability to mentally transport to wherever I want to go, kind of like "beam me up Scotty." Oh, and there won't be any snow and ice. Too bad for the penguins.

My cottage (yes, God is building me a cottage) will look out over a field with wildflowers flanked by a pine forest. Deer will graze, and bunnies will do whatever it is that bunnies do. A rocking chair is on my porch – my job is to hold all the babies.

Good news is I may have to wait a bit longer to see Heaven. Rather than facing a life-ending disease, as I thought at the first of the year, I have been diagnosed with a thyroid problem. After a few months of hormone treatment, I will be ready to tackle the world again.

Since I am not dying, God still has work for me to do, and that excites me! Is it my writing? Is it an adventure that includes travel? Is someone new coming into my life that needs me? I don't know, but I do know I need to be ready. No more ignoring God's hints, no more putting God last. If you are alive (and I am assuming you are) then God has something in store for you, too. He has plans; a challenge is coming your way! Be ready by filling your life with prayer and Bible study.

May this be the week God reminds you of His plan and you focus on living for Him now. Your Heaven can wait!

Regina

God is a Shape Shifter!

Thursday, March 13, 2014

I tend to be a sci-fi junkie. Some of my favorite characters are those that can body-shift at will. They use this skill to make earthlings comfortable with their presence, some for good, and some for evil. I imagine God as a shape shifter.

HE can be a dazzling ball of light, or a loud thunder, all energy and no form. He can be vaporous and laying thick in a forest, or appear as an animal, a lamb or a lion. But during my prayer time, HE is in human form. HE moves close, eager for my words. No flames, no light, not divided among a zillion earth-beings, but totally there with me, a loving father. Even though HE has the universe to tend to, wars to stop, the ozone to heal, *our* time together is a priority for HIM.

HE never forgets, is never too tired, and is never too busy. But sometimes I don't show up. There is GOD, sitting in a chair, waiting. HE doesn't leave. On occasion HE glances at HIS watch, but HE stays.

How often do I leave God sitting ... waiting? GOD!

HE wants to hear what's on *my* mind. ME of all people! And HE has peace to pass on and advice to give me, if I would just take the time. 2014 is the year of my new and improved prayer journal.

My Prayer Journal Journey has highlighted my lack of consistency, however. I squeeze in prayer whenever I can, between whatever else is going on that day. I actually make the Creator of the Universe wait. My hope this week is that GOD will have to look at HIS watch 50 percent less than HE did last week as HE shape shifts to wait on me.

Do you make the Almighty wait, or are you there on time?

Regina

Mustard Seed-Sized Faith Moved Mountain!

Tuesday, March 3, 2014

How much faith equals a mustard seed? Faith the size of a mustard seed moves mountains. I know.

But how much faith equals an average sized mustard seed? I asked God, and He gave me an object lesson. I have always heard "be careful what you pray for." For four weeks God gave me COPD. A life-expectancy of 5-10 years. Then more tests, each one coming back worse than the last. I wallowed in fear. In desperation, I gave the situation to God.

God, in His quiet ways, provided peace. About the time acceptance came (not happiness but resolution) the doctor discovered I had a dangerously low thyroid level. In a few months I will be good to go!

So how does this relate to mustard seeds? In my weakness, and even though I couldn't pray rationally, the spirit interceded and I was healed. Oh yes, the COPD was there on the initial CT scan. I had water around my heart. I was not a happy camper, but I guess happiness is not necessary when it comes to faith.

I thought moving mountains would be a Yoda-moment: arms extended, face in rigid concentration, and BANG, the mountain moves. Instead, God moved my mountain while I lay face down on my bed in a puddle of tears. Even with the tiniest mustard seed of faith, anything is possible. I know.

Regina