

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus,

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 6:26 (AMP) – Larger reading: Matthew 6:25-34

“Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow [seed] nor reap [the harvest] nor gather [the crops] into barns, and yet your heavenly Father keeps feeding them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

STORY:

There is a story which Principal Robert Raines used to tell about a man in Edinburgh who was a bad character and a confirmed lawbreaker. He had only one redeeming feature in his life – his love for his little girl, who was an only child, the very image of her dead mother. He committed burglary and was put into prison. During the term of his sentence the child died. On the day when he came out he learned of her death. It was a shattering blow. He could not go back to the house. In his wild and bitter distraction he resolved that when night came he would fling himself over the Dean Bridge and end it all. At midnight he stood on the bridge. He climbed the parapet when suddenly, for no reason that he could think of, there flashed into his mind the opening words of the Apostles’ Creed – “I believe in God, the Father Almighty.” And he stepped back. He knew nothing of God, but he did know something of fatherhood. “Why,” he found himself saying, “if that is what God is, if God is like that, then I would trust him with my lassie – and with myself!” And from that moment death receded; life began anew.

OBSERVATION:

Do you remember the TV program called, “GLEE”? The program would deal with some difficult issues surrounding faith and belief. It was the believer compared to the non-believer; the Christian compared to the non-Christian; between those who believe in prayer and those who have tried it and found it lacking in possibility. Listening closely the discovery is made that Sue prayed and prayed hard for her older sister to be normal, but no matter how hard she prayed the sister remained mentally challenged. The discovery concerns the teenager who has accepted his sexuality, but has difficulty with the religious orders of the day that condemns him and makes fun of him and says, in essence, that God made a mistake. Difficult issue as all hard issues of faith and believe are ... difficult because the answers aren’t simple nor easily arrived at ... difficult because there are no real forum outside of church itself for a deeper discussion, especially in today’s climate of separation of church and state ... difficult questions when the believers can only give glib answers or pat solutions afraid to admit their own doubts and struggles.

Some years ago there was another television program called “Joan of Arcadia”. I loved the program. God would appear to Joan in various forms, asking her to do his/her bidding in Joan’s school and/or community. The average church member had real difficulty with the show since God took on some rather unconventional personifications – the conventional we could accept the unconventional was quickly rejected. The basic

truth is still there ... how does God break into our lives and how open are we going to be to God when he doesn't do our bidding – as if he was some kind of “celestial bellhop.”

Mr. and Mrs. “Rodriquez” can prove my point. Each Sunday they were getting more distant, standoffish ... even hostile. Finally, I asked if I had done or said something to offend them. “No, but God has!” she declared. “In what way,” I inquired? “Well, Mr. Rodriquez is starting to lose his memory and I’m losing my hearing AND we pray every day, morning, noon and night, and NOTHING HAPPENS. Evidently we aren’t good enough for God to answer our prayers.” There in lies the crux of the matter for most of us. If we pray for something and it happens all for the good. But, and that is very large “but,” if we pray for something and nothing happens then God is written of as not caring or not even there.

We’ve all been there at one point or another. Even Mother Teresa illustrates her own personal struggle in this area in her journals. How we work through this actually makes our faith stronger. In “GLEE” one of the interesting conversations in one episode was between Sue and her sister. Her sister asked Sue if she believed in God and couldn’t understand why Sue couldn’t believe ... especially if she herself could believe ... believing not to answer the unanswerable questions, but to make it possible to go through another day.

The theme song from “Joan of Arcadia” was powerful. The words still haunt my spiritual being. **“What If God Was One Of Us” ...**

If God had a name, what would it be?
And would you call it to his face if you were faced with him and all his glory
what would you ask if you had just one question
yeah yeah God is great
yeah yeah God is good
yeah yeah, yeah yeah yeah
What if God was one of us?
just a slob like one of us
just a stranger on the bus, trying to make his way home

If God had a face, what would it look like?
And would you want to
if seeing meant that you would have to believe in things like heaven
and in Jesus and the saints and all the profits
and yeah yeah God is great
and yeah yeah God is good
yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah
What if God was one of us
just a slob like one of us
just a stranger on the bus
trying to make his way home

trying to make his way home
back up to heaven all alone
nobody calling on the phone
except for the Pope maybe in Rome

yeah yeah God is great
yeah yeah God is good
yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah
what if God was one of us
just a slob like one of us
just a stranger on the bus
trying to make his way home
just trying to make his way home
like a holy rolling stone
back up to heaven all alone
just trying to make his way home
nobody calling on the phone
except for the Pope maybe in Rome

And so, we get up in the morning, wash our face, put on our clothes, have breakfast and face another day ... we can either face it with God or without God ... it actually depends on how we want to face the difficult questions of life.

QUOTE:

“For every complex problem there is a simple solution--and it is always wrong.”
- H.L. Mencken

PRAYER:

Thank you Father for being there when we need you the most. Thank you for all the blessings that you give to us. Thank you for knowing what is best for us. Thank you for listening. Amen

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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***Continue to pray for God to do a mighty thing thru Manatee Life Church!
– Dream Big... Pray Bigger!***