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## “More to Come”

BY PASTOR JOHN HILLMER

Reflect on the Prayer of the Day: “***O God, help us to know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly...***”. A Time-honored prayer of Anglican origin which is also a hymn. So often, we settle for less. However God is a God of “more”. There is always “more” - more to come.

David Foster Wallace -- a graduation speech he offered at Kenyon College as follows:

*“Here's something that's weird but true: in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for choosing . . . [God] . . . to worship just might be that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you really tap into meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. Worship your body and beauty and attractiveness, and you will always feel inadequate. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. Worship power, you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb your own fears. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. The insidious thing about these forms of worship is not that they're outright evil or sinful, it's that they're unconscious. They are default settings. They're the kind of worship you just gradually slip into, day after day, getting more and more selective about what you see, and how you measure value, without ever being fully aware that that's what you're doing.”*

For full speech see: <https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/DFWKenyonAddress2005.pdf>;

This is a call for 'awareness'; to open ourselves up, to not becoming jaded; to be aware of ourselves and mindful. Mindful of God.

So my take away from all of this is: "If David Foster Wallace is right - if it is human nature that we are going to worship something, and it's likely that we will slip into worshipping things that will eventually empty us, or eat us alive from the inside out! Then, every time we stop and acknowledge God's presence, bow down or worship so to speak, we are counteracting that from happening. We are rejecting worship of the things that would drain us of life and joy, things that would lead us from selfishness to emptiness; and we are turning to the One that gives us life, the One who lifts our hearts, and the One who shows us who we are and what this world is meant to be."

"Speak Lord your servant is listening!" young Samuel said. "Speak!" "I'm listening". And his mentor, Eli approved, and said the same thing: "Don't listen to ME" (says old Eli) "Listen to the Lord" who is calling you.

In our Psalm today, King David says the same thing. David had a lot of power and influence that he had doled out in his life. He'd had a long-run at it - 40 years on the throne. He did some GREAT things; he did some TERRIBLE things. BIG failures. But the thing is, he ultimately, always finally turned his head and this thoughts to God:

*Lord, you encompass me – behind and before - your Hand is ever upon me and around me.*

*You are acquainted with all my ways. There is no a word upon my lips that you do not know.*

*Such knowledge is wonderful! (Too wonderful for me!)*

*Therefore...I will thank you, because I am wonderfully made*

*How deep are your thoughts O God!*

*How great the sum of them.*

*If I were to try to count them -- my life span would need to be like yours!!!*

In other words, there is always more to come. And the "MORE" is good, for God is good! There is always more to come, and it comes from "without" – not from "within".

So with young Samuel, we say "speak Lord, for you servant is listening!"

And with old king David, we say "Thank you". Such knowledge is beyond me; so high that I cannot attain it." So "Thank" you.

And also, as with Nathaniel, let us not "settle". Settle for such little, trivial stuff. Like "God seeing us under the fig tree". That is, God sees us during our 'nap time'. When we're slacking, and resting. Those little insignificant moments in each of our days! "Why" (that's small potatoes Jesus says) "you'll see greater things than these!" I tell you, you will see heaven opened! (it's like saying - you'll see the universe opening up!!!)

Jesus is not 'dissing' Nathanael. He's saying: ""there's more to come". There's a little bit of Nathanael in all of us; sarcastic; cynical; skeptic. Nathaniel has trouble seeing past 'small town origins'. "Can anything GOOD come out of Nazareth?"

CAN be fun-loving rivalry.

\*TX - can anything good come out of OKKIES?

"IN – Hoosiers – can anything good come out of Kentucky?"

UF saying can anything good come out of FSU? (vice versa)

CAN also turn sinister.

Can anything good come out of Africa? Haiti?

Our skepticism, and cynicism, and pre-conceptions PREVENT us, from greater truth.

Nathaniel's preconception about God's character prevented him from seeing God's presence "here and now". But Jesus speaks graciously to Nathaniel. You will see greater things than these. You will see the heavens opened. The whole WORLD will open up before your eyes. For God's grace – God's Blessing – God's favor – God's Living Word is for all the nations of the world.

We sang the canticle: "Listen! You Nations of the world" or "Shine, Jesus Shine. Flood the Nations with light/glory". Just pretty words? Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah.

### **Isaiah 49**

Listen to me, O coastlands,  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!

<sup>2</sup> He made my mouth like a sharp sword,  
with words to speak;  
he made me a polished arrow,  
set in his quiver until the right time.

he made me to bring Jacob back,  
and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
<sup>6</sup> but he says,  
'It is too light a thing that you should raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and restore only the remnant of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'

The LORD called me before I was born,  
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.  
<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD,  
'Kings shall see and stand up,  
princes, shall listen because of the LORD, who is faithful,

<sup>8</sup> Thus says the LORD:  
I have kept you  
as a covenant to the people,  
to establish the land,  
<sup>11</sup> And I will turn mountains into a road,  
and my highways shall be raised up.  
<sup>12</sup> Lo, these shall come from far away,  
from the north and from the west,  
<sup>13</sup> Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;  
break forth, O mountains, into singing!  
For the LORD has comforted his people,  
and will have compassion on all his suffering ones.

Let us live by the narrative of Scripture; not by a narrative that is small, selective,  
condescending.

**"Can anything GOOD come out of (Nazareth)?**

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us  
not...

Let us give thanks for God's gift of forgiveness. And as Epiphany 'unfolds' let us live,  
and walk in God's Light.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.