



Made for More

Ten Reflections On God's Calling In The
Transitional Seasons of Life.

DR. BRUCE GORDON

Introduction

In this short devotional collection, Dr. Bruce Gordon challenges the idea that youth is the best part of life. He asserts that we often make too little of our opportunities in later life—we were made for more than the golf course or the rocking chair.

These practical devotionals, rooted in Scripture, are designed to help you transition into a season of life that can be rich with purpose, significance, and hope as you continue to serve God. You'll be encouraged and empowered to build a life that matters now and for eternity. Discover for yourself that the best years—the most impactful years of your life—are still to come.

“*I believe more than ever, that the 55+ demographic need to take a stand for what we believe and be an example to those who are following us. We are still engaged in the game, rather than spectators in the stands. -Dr. Bruce Gordon*

Contents

Is Retirement Changing? 04

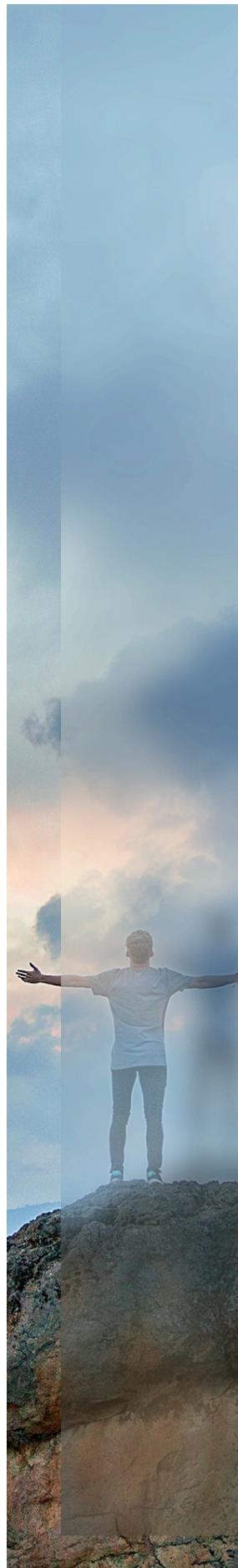
Perspectives On Spiritual
Companionship 08

Living in Liminal Spaces 12

Tag - He's It! 15

Thin Spaces 19

You Belong. You Are Blessed. 23



Contents

Six Realities God Wants You
To Know 27

Learning To Sew 30

In The Palm Of His Hands 34

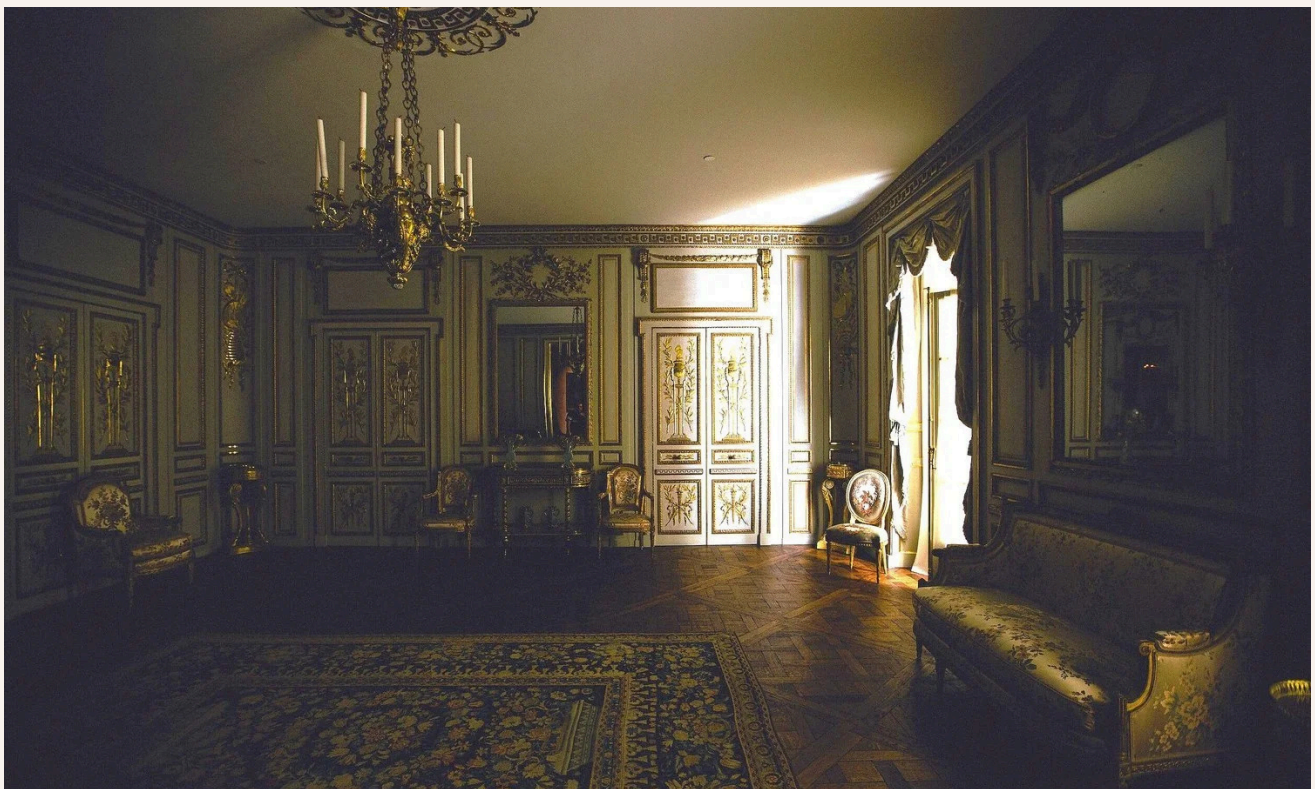
Keep Your Ear on the Rail 39



01 Is Retirement Changing?

I grew up on a farm in Northern Ontario. My father lived between two mindsets; one, that farmers never retire; two, working at a local steel mill (because he could not make it in his first love, farming) he would do what was needed and then retire so he could continue his passion. And that is what he did after 25 years.

I believe that we are products of our fathers, which can be both positive and negative. My father resisted the local company thinking of work hard and when you reach 25–30 years with us, you can then retire and really begin to enjoy life.

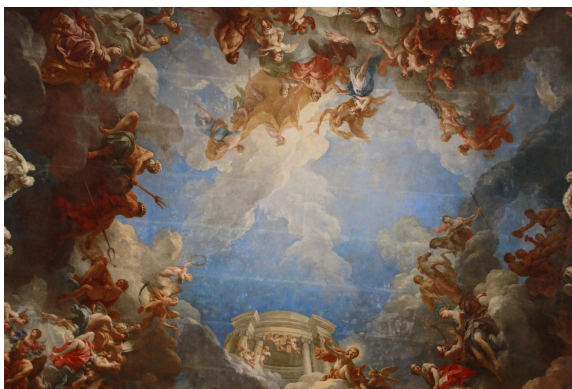


He was ahead of his time for he said to me, "Bruce, retirement is changing, and you may never retire in the sense that we know it today!"

On August 31st, after 9 years on the pastoral staff at Peace Portal Alliance Church, I sensed God saying, you have done what I asked you to do. The word for this is "retirement." I have been deeply honoured by the words and notes of thanks and congratulations. Again, I say thanks. I have received so much more than I have ever given.

James Houston states that,
"Retirement is not in the language
of the Christian."

Now, energy does decline as we age, and we need to periodically assess our capacity and sustainability. Yes, vocation will change, however, calling will not. Many are asking me, what is next and how are you processing all this? I can say, this transition is not a "cake walk."

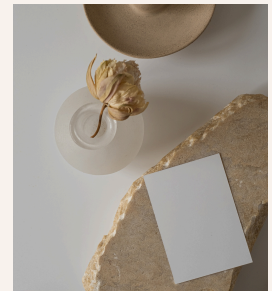


**"They still bear
fruit in old age;
they are ever
full of sap and
green, ..."**

Psalm 92:14

I love PPAC and being a pastor is a calling on my life.
So, what am I experiencing?

- My mind plays games and I find myself going to what if's. What if I had stayed? What if finances will not be enough? What if, my purpose is finished?
- Colleagues are telling me not to accept any new opportunities for 90 days. That is 3 months! Whew!
- I have not realized how tired I was. Don't like to admit it, yet. I have been running this marathon for over 50 years.
- Denise and I are working out what this means for us, as I am now more on her turf! I do say, that unlike one friend who retired, I am not reorganizing her kitchen!



Paralleling this, I am processing 5 perspectives.

- *Transition experienced through retirement is a useful shock. I have always said, doing the same thing and hoping for new results is the definition of insanity. My system has certainly been shocked.*
- *This needs to be a time of spiritual growth and I am being deliberate in who I will consistently process this with. Some would call a Counsellor like this a Spiritual Director.*
- *I am critically re-evaluating my vocation, not my calling. How do I want to live out these next years? Recently, I took a blank sheet of paper and wrote down six points on what I want this new day to be about.*

- *I am thinking about what has been prayed over me for calling. I want to be the best “sage” I can be, as I invest in others.*
- *I do not want to get caught in “Destination Mentality.” An author I am reading used this term to define when all hopes, dreams, who I am, my well-being is based on today. The counter to this, is to understand that I am on a journey and I have not arrived. I am still a pastor, a Man of Issachar who invests in leaders, and Jesus’ grace is sufficient for me.*

I used this analogy to a colleague:

I have entered a room, which I have never been in before. Oh, I have seen the door in the distance and had a perspective of what the room held and was like. Yet, four weeks ago, I opened the door and walked in. I am finding some surprises. I have looked back through the door at what I left behind and sighed.

Yet, this room is not my destination! I am simply crossing the floor to the other side. Jesus will not rush me. I will not fall though into the basement. And more importantly, I will not get stuck and be in the room forever. I may just meet some of you in this room.

When I do, please tell me not to look back, rather keep moving. I will do the same for you.

02

Perspectives on Spiritual Companionship



About 60 kms East of Sault Ste Marie, on Highway 17, there is the sixth largest lake island in the world. It is comprised of pristine sugar maples and rolling countryside. It is especially known to produce maple syrup and was a destination for our family each Spring to feast on pancakes, sausages and pure maple syrup.

It is called St Joseph Island and until 1973, was only accessible by ferry. That year, the Brent Gilbertson Bridge was completed and opened to traffic.

One of my brothers as a teenager, who worked on the bridge, fell off into three feet of water. He landed on his back, if he had gone in headfirst, it would have been fatal. He remembers seeing the ferry coming in, upside down as he fell. On climbing back up to the bridge deck, the superintendent from the ferry asked if anything had fallen off the bridge. My brother said, "yes, that was me." He is still with us, though I think his days of working on bridges ended there.

The superstructure of the bridge is made up of two large, hollow steel box girders resting on seven trapezoidal piers, anchored into the bottom of the St Joseph Channel.

Remove just one of the seven piers and there is no way, anybody will drive across that bridge. Yes, there is strength in numbers, and the Apostle Paul wrote of this in Ephesians 4. The faith of just one person is multiplied exponentially when combined with the faith of all.



I was recently reminded of this, and how critical community is. A friend—who I would call my spiritual director—challenged me to be a “spiritual companion”: to be alongside another, to help them in seeking God’s direction as they focus on their life. It is not about being one who directs the other; rather, simply being a companion. God is the director, and my part is to be a soul friend—to use spiritual eyes to respond to their soul.

I am on a journey to be the best spiritual companion that I am able at this season of my life—to understand in a deeper way what St. Teresa, John of the Cross, and Brother Lawrence understood and had a profound appreciation for: that there is an active life of the soul that goes on beneath our awareness.

I know that I am better together than alone, and out of this comes purpose—which all of us need.

What am I learning as I reflect on being a spiritual companion? There are three things which I need to learn so I can authentically help others.

Author Thomas Keating suggests there are three desires we need to let go of: our desire for control and power; our desire for affection, esteem, and approval; and our desire for security and survival. I need to release my need to control what I perceive is safe and trust God completely. It is what a close friend and colleague—who is a retired Green Beret—recently told me: Be comfortable with the uncomfortable.

I need to rest in God's unconditional love, remembering that my worth is not dependent on the approval of others. This heals the false belief that I must earn God's love.

We live in a society that fears old age. There are reasons for this, and yet we need to embrace it as a time of harvesting from our experiences. One author writes aging isn't about losing youth; rather, it is about gaining depth.

So, I need to be comfortable with who I am and rest in my true self—then to use this in being a spiritual companion to the younger generation.

I need to rest
in God's
unconditional
love,
remembering
that my
worth is not
dependent on
the approval
of others.



Together, may we let go and learn about the active life of our souls that is happening—at times beneath our awareness.

Also, as my brother has learned from this experience, God is so involved in the details of our lives. He is intimately present in every moment. He desires my fulfilment. That is worth reflecting on—and doing it with a spiritual companion.

03 Living in a Liminal Space

In my September 2023 Devotional, I wrote the following in reference to my finishing a role after 9 years and some calling it retirement.

“I have entered a room, which I have never been in before. Oh, I have seen the door in the distance and had a perspective of what the room held and was like. Yet, four weeks ago, I opened the door and walked in. I am finding some surprises. I have looked back through the door at what I left behind and sighed.”



An author, Alice Fryling, in *Aging Faithfully, the Holy Invitation of Growing Older*, writes about Liminal Space. When reading it, I immediately connected with what I had written above. I quote her on the definition.

"It is the unknown place between where we are and where we will be. It is a place that is mysterious, vague, exciting, and scary all wrapped up into something new and uninformed. It is moving to where we have never been before."

Each year, Denise and I choose a word that we want to focus on over the following twelve months. For me in 2024, it is two words. Different and Unlearned.

They are related and I do want this next year to be different and to do so, I need to "unlearn."

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi writes:

"If we viewed elderhood as the crowning achievement of our lives, we would open the door with reverence and anticipation."

If I am to give proper sunshine and nourishment to ensure that it grows to health and vigour, as Rabbi Zalman writes, then I need to unlearn. I have had perspectives that may have been good previously, however, in this new liminal space, they are not life-giving, and I need to unlearn.

Over the next few devotionals, I will be sharing from my journey in this room. I will expand upon what I am “unlearning” in this new vantage point.

Here are five:

- *How will I now define what productivity means?*
- *How will I nourish, value, and invest in community? For as one ages, community becomes crucial.*
- *How will I accept being in this liminal space and not always looking back through the door I just entered? I love how Alice Fryling writes this: “What if God’s interest in what I do grows out of a fundamental interest in God knowing who I am and who He has made me to be.”*
- *How will I practically live into Rabbi Zalman’s words that this time really is the crowning achievement? I so often hear, “They say these are the golden years; not very golden for me!”*
- *How will I approach the experiences I may not like in this liminal space and listen for the soft, quiet, gentle words of the Holy Spirit? As He whispers, “Do not worry. It is OK and I love you, even when you are not able to do all you used to do, and I will keep reminding you of my love.”*

“What if God’s interest in what I do grows out of a fundamental interest in God knowing who I am and who He has made me to be.”

So... is this possible—what I am writing about?

On my own, no. However, through the power of the Holy Spirit, yes, as I grasp onto the words of Deuteronomy 30:11:

“What I am asking of you is not too difficult for you and it is not beyond your reach.” Deuteronomy 30:11

Why don’t you also choose the word “Unlearn” for 2024 and share with me what you are unlearning!

04

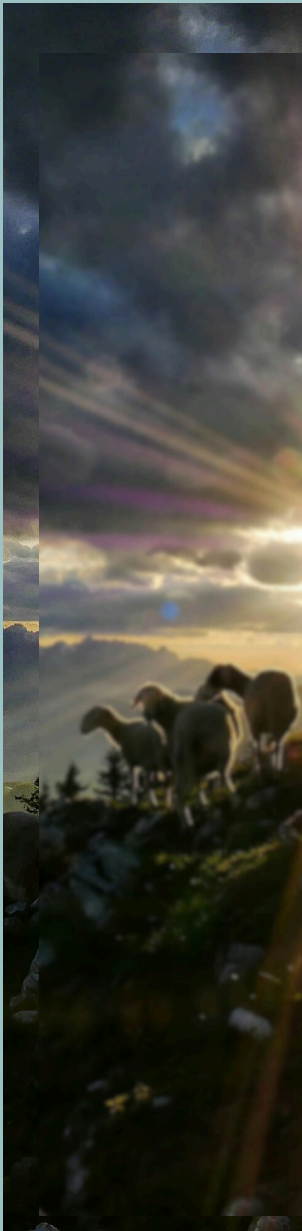
Tag - He's It!

The village of Echo Bay, Ontario, when I was in public school, had one stop sign, a grocery store, gas station, barbershop, general hardware store, and a post office that was in a small stone building that had been the local jail.

The small public school was where I would arrive each school day on the local bus, after being picked up at our farm's front door. It was here that I spent two happy years in Grade Seven.

I had two favourite activities in school. One was reading Hardy Boy books, and the other was recess. Amazing I did not spend two happy years in every grade!

During the early grades, at recess, we always played tag—"you're it!" This burned off energy, which our teachers were thrilled about. There was a problem though. At times, the big kids joined in, and when that happened, we—the smaller kids—were always "it." When this happened to me, I felt like I was going to be "it" forever. Somehow, they changed the rules every time, and all of us smaller kids were "it." Hated it!



As I shared in my last devotional, I am now well into this new room called “Liminal Space,” and will continue to expand what I am “unlearning.” I asked a close friend—who is a scholar, teacher, and pastor—what is a “must read” that I need to work through during this time. He was back to me promptly and said, “Get a copy of Dallas Willard’s *Life Without Lack*.”

I just finished it and yes, it is a must read. Dallas shares thoughts from Psalm 23. The psalmist is describing the life we all desire: to want or lack for nothing. Really?



Here are four thoughts from this book, which I am working through.

I want to live a Psalm 23 life for the years I have left. If Jesus really is my Shepherd and with me 24/7, do I want this? For if I answer this honestly and say yes, my life is going to be different—and that coincides with one of my words for 2024: Different.

However, it does require you to say to Jesus, and mean it, “Jesus, I want to experience more with you.” As Dallas writes, “Am I really enthralled with Jesus or only prepared to put up with Him?”

It is okay for me to be who I am; that God accepts me, and I do not have to be someone else.

Also, what is true about myself as a person is also true about what you and I do. Your work is valuable. It is good that you are alive and who you are.

I cannot drift into a life of constant companionship with Jesus. I need to be deliberate about this and work it out with Him. Oh, I can drift into sin; however, not righteousness.

Being on the road with Jesus will mean a few realities for me. I will have the strength to do what He wants and assigns.

I will have a deep sense of joy and confidence. These are connected, for joy brings confidence, and I do not need to focus on “what ifs,” which I am very prone to do.

In the game of tag—“you are it”—Jesus is the “it” and I am “not it.” It is not up to me to make it all happen, for it does not all depend on me. In fact, over the years, I have prayed, “Lord, multiply my efforts,” and then continued to try and help Him along. In this new liminal space, Jesus is it.

So, as I journey on, I am praying throughout the day, “Jesus, you are it!”

...He will
transform us
and teach us
how to do even
greater things,
as John 14:12
tells us. We do
not need to
fear we won't
be useful, for in
this new season
we are called to
love in new
ways.



Alice Fryling writes that one disturbing fear we face in aging is a sense of uselessness. We fear that we have entered a season of nonproductivity, incompetence, or creeping irrelevancy.

With Jesus as “it,” He will transform us and teach us how to do even greater things, as John 14:12 tells us. We do not need to fear we won’t be useful, for in this new season we are called to love in new ways.

And that is because He lives!

05 Thin Spaces

*"Even to your old age and gray hairs, I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you."
Isaiah 46:4 (NIV)*

There are tales of supposed holy sites—holy ground—where it seems conditions are opportune to experience the presence of God.

Eugene Peterson also wondered about these stories and wrote about Flathead Lake, Montana. "I sometimes wondered if something like that could be going on in this place. I sometimes wonder still."



In my May 2021 devotional, I wrote of a small island in the Inner Hebrides called Iona. It is known as a “thin space,” where heaven is no longer so far from you. The space between where God is and His vast earth is wildly thin.

Like Eugene, I wonder still about places like this.

In my book, *Strategic Cheriths*, I wrote about being home on my parents’ farm and, at dusk, walking through a field of freshly mown hay. I was in a place where so much had gone wrong, and I was audibly letting Him know how I was barely hanging onto a thin thread of faith for my future. Gazing into the setting sun, I asked Him, “Are you really there?”

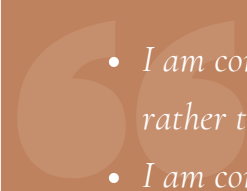
Suddenly a lone sparrow sprang into flight, prompted by an unseen hand, and I watched it climb and draw a heading toward the setting sun. I stood there with a tear on my cheek, watching this little bird until it was only a speck—and then no more. It was a thin space, for the Creator had just drawn back the veil and, in that moment, I felt His tangible presence. I looked behind me, expecting to see Him, as the words of Matthew 10:31 entered that valley for me:

“Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” Matthew 10:31

I will be finishing my staff role at Peace Portal Alliance Church. It comes with anticipation and yet sadness, though I sense my Captain directing me to create new capacity. I want to experience thin spaces, and I believe they are not limited to certain locations. Rather, when we most need God, the space can become thin.

As I write this, the devastation of the British Columbia fires is raging, and there are some, who I know, who have lost their homes. Oh, my heart and prayers are with them. They also so need a thin space, where they linger and know God is there.

I leave you with the same six convictions I wrote in May 2021. They are wonderments, like Peterson mused on as he canoed Flathead Lake.

- 
- *I am convicted of focusing on my conscious efforts to be useful and effective, rather than lingering in the thin space of God's presence.*
 - *I am convicted for not believing in God's vast power, which is oh so near—a thin space.*
 - *I am convicted for using my own reasoning, when I need to remember things are not what they appear, as He is at work in my thin space.*
 - *I am convicted for being too intense on my circumstances and completely losing sight of His presence—and, in the words of my golfer friend who is having open heart surgery before the end of August, "I am in the palm of His hand." That sounds like no space between He and I at all.*
 - *I am convicted that I do not live like the birds of the air, the lilies, the stars—simply and unaffectedly. Thin spaces are not complicated.*
 - *I am convicted for forgetting just how close God is, and that I am in a thin space right now.*

From my "thin space" to yours, I leave you with the words of Psalm 23. May they remind you of just how close God is, and you do not need to worry, be anxious, or fret. God has you in the palm of His hand. He will see you through to the other side of your thin space, and we know we shall see Him as He is.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd.

I have all that I need.

He lets me rest in green meadows.

He leads me beside peaceful streams.

He renews my strength.

He guides me along right paths,

bringing honor to his name.

Even when I walk through the darkest valley,

I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff comfort me.

You prepare a place for me in the presence of my enemies

You honor me by anointing my head with oil.

My cup overflows with blessing.

*Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of
my life,*

And I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

06

You Belong. You Are Blessed.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

Ephesians 1:3

What does it mean to be an outsider, to not be included?

I suspect many of you could tell a story where you felt this way. I remember lining up on the ball diamond on our school playing field. Two people would be selected as captains (strange, I never was one of those chosen), and they would each take turns in selecting players for their team. I can vividly remember when I was the first person chosen, and also the last person to be taken, as I watched the line dwindle down to me.

To not belong is one of the greatest issues we face.

The culture in the time of Jesus was one of either belonging, or not.

Here are some examples:

- *The Jew had an immense contempt for the Gentile. If a Jewish boy or girl married a Gentile, their funeral was carried out.*
- *The Wall of Hostility was a physical barrier within the Temple at Jerusalem—an outer court called the Court of the Gentiles had a one and a half metre stone barricade. The words posted were, “Trespassers will be executed.”*
- *There was no way a Gentile could be accepted by Yahweh.*

Something changed on Resurrection Sunday. Jesus killed the hostility between man and God. The slain also was the slayer. (Armitage Robinson) St. Augustine writes, “God thirsts to be thirsted for.”

His heart is sensitive, tender, and He celebrates our feeble expressions of gratitude; a cup of cold water can place tears in the eyes of God.

The letter we call Ephesians is the bridge—the link—which tells us of the reality of God’s lavish love for us.



Dr. Darrell Johnson writes about the powerful meaning of the word “bless” used in Ephesians. It is the Greek word *eulogytos*, which is a word that involves the posture of kneeling. To bless means to actually bring a gift to another while kneeling in front of them out of respect. Stretching out your hands, you give them a gift. It was a common word and understood by the early readers of Ephesians.

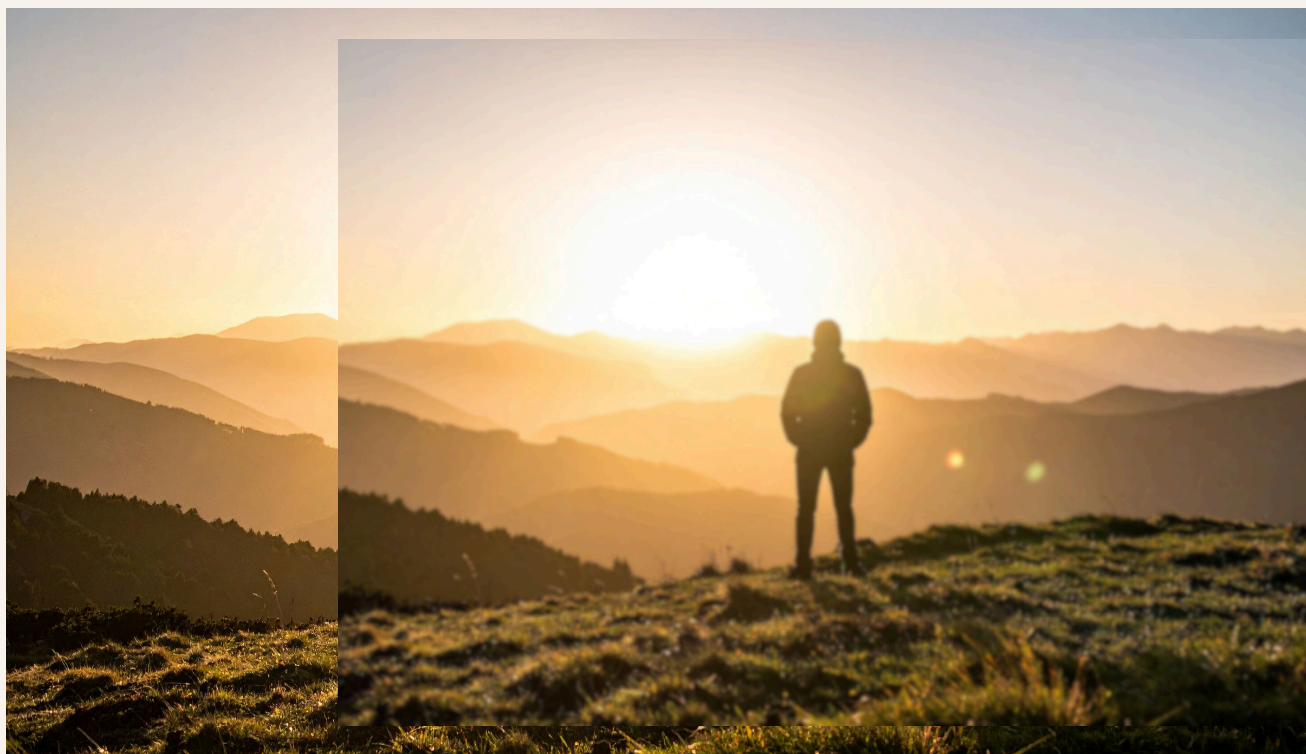
To bless God is to come into His presence, kneel in adoration and submission, lift up your hands, and offer Him a gift—your very self.

Now this same word is used about God coming and blessing you and I. Get a picture of what this looks like. It is absolutely amazing—and also humbling.

God comes to us, kneels before us, stretches out His hands to us, and gives us gifts. Yes, lots of gifts. However, the ultimate gift which He gives to bless us as His created beings is Himself in Jesus. That picture calls for a “wow!”

My prayer for you today is: “Let us see Your greatness, so that we can receive it. Help us bow in Your presence in endless wonder and ceaseless praise, to love You as You love us. May you know that you truly and majestically belong.”

God comes to
us, kneels
before us,
stretches out
His hands to us,
and gives us
gifts. Yes, lots of
gifts... the
ultimate gift
which He gives
to bless us as
His created
beings is
Himself in
Jesus.



No need to wait in line to be selected; you are already on His team. You are not an outsider—rather, you belong. Yes, you are blessed.

"The Lord bless you and keep you;

*the Lord make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;*

*the Lord lift up His countenance on you
and give you peace."*

Numbers 6:24–26

07 Six Realities Jesus Wants You To Know

In my Bible, I have the direct words of Jesus in red letters. These days, I am focusing on the “red.” Here is one of those verses in John 16:33:

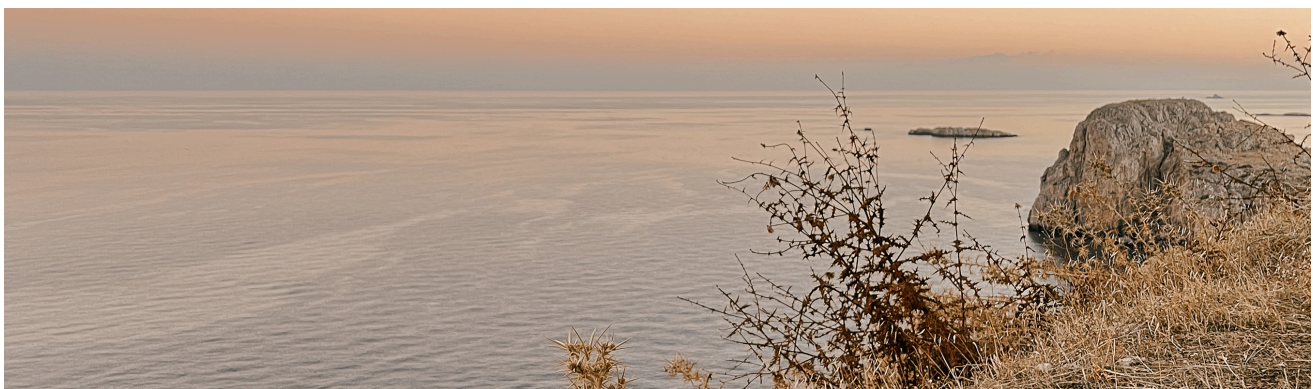
“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart: I have overcome the world.” John 16:33



Over the years I have seen succession planning done well and done poorly. I counsel leaders of all ages to think about their succession and how it needs to be modelled and driven from the top.

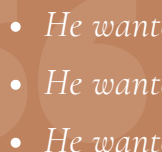
Have you ever wondered why Jesus stuck around for forty days after His resurrection? We do not have much written on what He was about during this time, yet we do know from 1 Corinthians 15:6 that on at least one occasion, He appeared to over 500 people.

I would like to suggest that Jesus was a master strategist in succession planning. He knew He could not immediately go back to Heaven without preparing His disciples for the task ahead of them. We see that during this 40-day period these self-centered men were transformed to turn the known world upside down. Of course, it was through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, but they also needed the basics, and Jesus stayed with them to ensure they had the foundation to help them stay the course for the impossible assignment in front of them. We are learning about this as we study the early church in our Acts series on Sundays, this fall.



These men would have gone back to the words which Jesus shared with them in that Upper Room—red letter words, so to speak. He so wanted them to understand that He had overcome the world, He is still overcoming the world, and He will always be in an overcoming position over this world.

Here are six reasons which I would say Jesus wanted the disciples—and us—to know.

- 
- *He wanted them to know that He was alive; He had risen from the dead.*
 - *He wanted them to know that He was the Messiah and was in absolute control.*
 - *He wanted them to know that though at times He was invisible, He still was present with them. One example of this was when He met Thomas and told him exactly what he had been saying—and Jesus had not been visibly present during this conversation.*
 - *He wanted them to know that He would return.*
 - *He wanted them to know that if they died, they would be immediately with Him, where He was.*
 - *He wanted them to see His new amazing body, which was different, even though He still had the five senses. It was an example of the kind of supercharged bodies they would have in the future—and that means us as well.*

Obviously, they got it—and the world has never been the same. You and I also need to get it, for these six reasons are as relevant to us today during this pandemic as they were to the disciples.

I read the “red letter words” and I say, “WOW!” They help me to get my eyes off the uncertainty I feel about the future, days when I say, “What did I do today?”, the anxious thoughts which come at me at times, and the other paralyzing ways that some of you have shared with me.

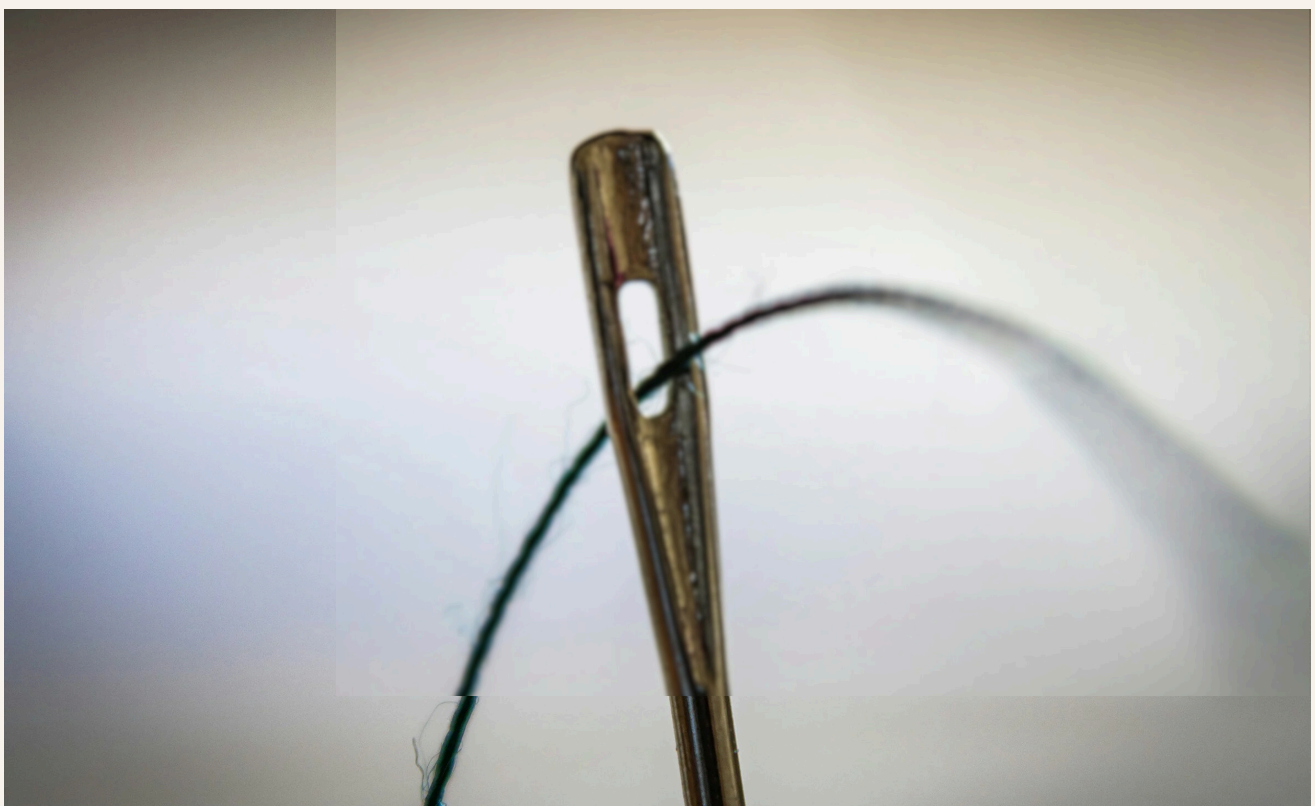
My fellow passengers on this journey, focus on the “red.” Jesus has and is overcoming, and I encourage you today to remember the six foundational realities that He wanted His disciples to trust in. This is all about God’s wisdom and supernatural equipment, so to speak, for us. It also speaks to me about who am I investing in.

08 Learning To Sew

In his book *Embers – One Ojibway's Meditations*, Richard Wagamese writes of a great teaching he learned about life from a woman Elder. My wife has First Nations status with her roots in the Ojibway nation—she shared this with me.

When Wagamese asked this woman about the greatest teaching in life, she responded, “You have to make your own moccasins.”

He responded, “You are kidding, right?”



She elaborated:

“You make them from the hide of your experience, all the places you have walked. You sew them with the thread of the teachings, the lessons embedded in all the hard miles. You stitch them carefully with the needle of your intention—to walk a spiritual path—and when you’re finished, you realize that the Creator lives in the stitches. That’s what helps you to walk more gracefully.”

The Wagamese quietly responded, “I got busy learning how to sew.”

In a liminal space, there are two verses which I have found hanging on a wall, as I journey through.

*“Let God/the Holy Spirit change
your way of thinking.”*

Romans 12:2 (CEV)

*“Be content to be simply
yourself.”*

Luke 14:11 (MSG)



As I look back
on my life, I
have learned
new sewing
lessons in the
dark which I
could never
have learned in
the light. Yes, I
need the
darkness as
much as I need
the light.

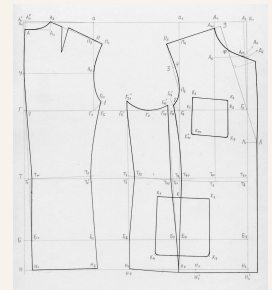
St. John of the Cross lived in the mid fifteen hundreds.
He writes:

*"When we let go of everything, we make room for God
to work in our lives."*

This is when we find ourselves living into Romans 12:2
—and truly learn to sew.



So... here are three stitches I am learning in my liminal
sewing room.



1. *I need to pay attention to which is which.* There are times when I have given all in a session alongside of another and was tired, though remember thinking, this is a good tiredness. Other times, I have been exhausted and felt totally drained and said, "I cannot do that again." Learn to know the difference, my friends.
2. *I never have been very good at saying no.* As we age, learning to say no—and then experiencing using this small word—can be life-giving. I can write these words, yet to practice them is so hard for me. Focusing on my capacity and what is sustainable helps. It does link with my first point on what produces a good tiredness, and what I find draining.
3. *I just finished reading a book, Learning to Walk in the Dark by Barbara Brown Taylor.* She writes: "When light fades and darkness falls (as it does in our lives), God does not turn the world over to some other deity. Even when you cannot see where you are going and no one answers when you call, this is not sufficient proof that you are alone."

As I look back on my life, I have learned new sewing lessons in the dark which I could never have learned in the light. Yes, I need the darkness as much as I need the light.

What have you learned in those dark areas of your life?

Two questions to contemplate:

1. What thinking do you need the help of the Holy Spirit to change?
2. Being spiritually healthy is crucial, and we long for it in the deepest part of our beings.

To work towards this, you must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life. What are practical steps you need to take to do this? It does begin with saying no.

09

In The Palm of His Hands



This past Sunday, I shared about the conviction I have of the quality of my faith. I can be amazed at what God is doing and has done, and yet not be living by faith.

I shared that I am asking myself four questions about the quality and depth of my living faith:

1. **Am I settled, hopeful, courageous, active, celebratory** with a God-glorifying faith knowing I am in Jesus' hands?
2. **Do I really believe that Jesus, You do exist, and You reward those who seek You?** Those who are in Jesus' hands.
3. **Do I really believe that You are saying, "Continue steadily on with what I have asked you to do, and I will guard your life and mind"?** I have you in the palm of My hand.
4. **Is my faith radical, revealed most clearly in not giving up in prayer**—having a persistency that stands in the gap, when I face obstacles, disappointments, fears, anxieties—and returning to the reality, I am in Jesus' hands?

Jesus says that living faith keeps asking. Not because we need to wear God down, but because that is what living faith does. It asks God to do what only God can do. In some ways, faith knows we are helpless. When we stop praying, we have stopped believing—believing there is a God, and also that He really does care about me.

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1

There are three Living Faith mindsets I want to leave with you from this devotional.

Persistence is not succumbing to the worry of age,

When the age does not build upon the Living God, the age will build on idols—and any age built on idols will be marked by profound worry. In a 2020 survey, 62% of respondents reported they are struggling with anxiety. As I looked at research on this issue, all sources are commenting on an increase of anxiety in children and youth. Since the pandemic, this percentage has increased.

Yes, we need community and at times to be sharing with a few how you are doing; something occurs in our brains when we share our fears, even when the person we are sharing with can only listen.

Yes, at times, you need professional support.

Yes, be persistent in recognizing the age you are in, and it does have an impact on you; be persistent in understanding that as our world faces greater issues, Jesus is building His Kingdom. Things are not what they appear.

Yes! Ask for prayer.

Persistence in knowing Jesus is coming again.

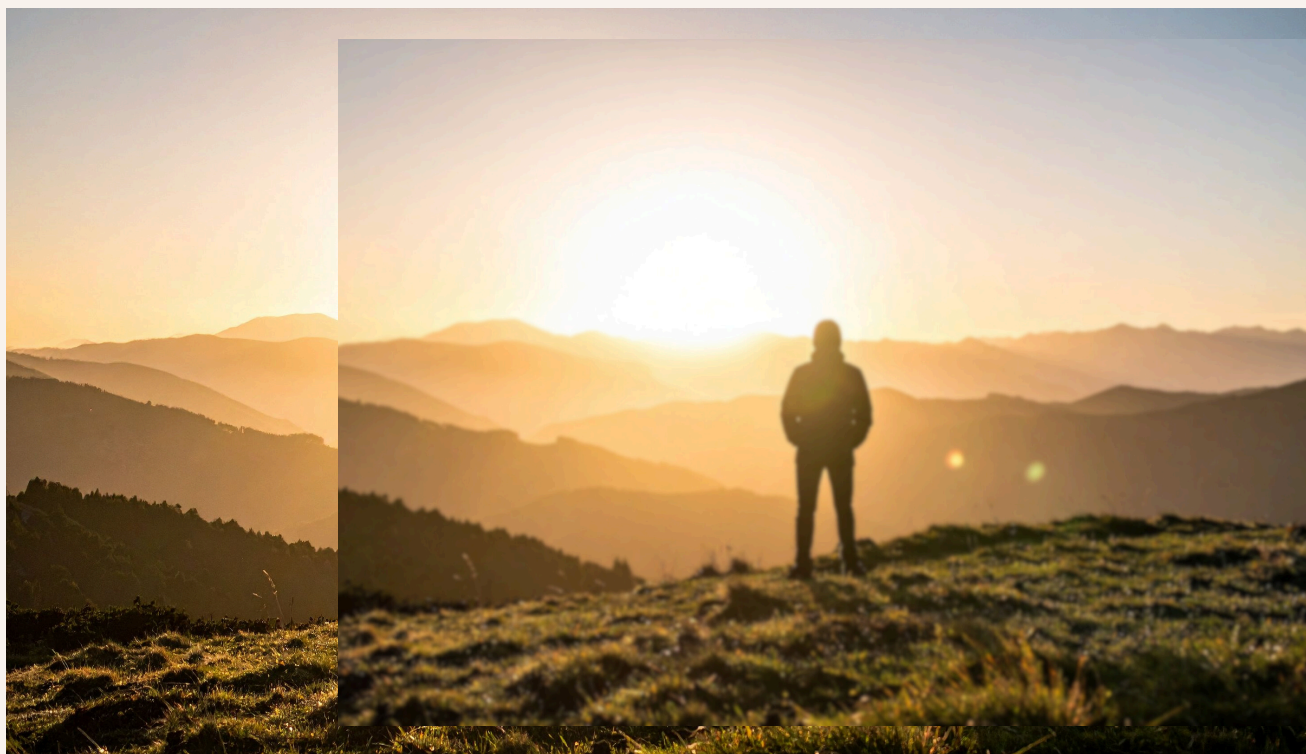
I love the picture which Dr. Darrell Johnson gave us some years back of Jesus building His Kingdom. He likened it to tectonic plates in the earth's crust as they rub and grind back and forth. When this occurs, there are severe consequences with earthquakes and volcanos. As we look out and see the world in great chaos, we can become discouraged and even give up. Jesus says, as I build My Kingdom, the battle is going to intensify. So, as you see this happening in our age, look up.

Friends, hang in there. I have not lost control; it is the opposite. The Kingdom is coming speedily, because where Jesus is, the Kingdom is. Where the King is, there is the Kingdom. Jesus is very close at hand. He is returning not from a far place, rather so close.

That is why when you call upon Him, He will come to your help speedily. Live with heaven in sight.

Jesus is coming back.

God comes to
us, kneels
before us,
stretches out
His hands to us,
and gives us
gifts. Yes, lots of
gifts... the
ultimate gift
which He gives
to bless us as
His created
beings is
Himself in
Jesus.



Persistence is being a person of prayer.

What do you need to practice persistency in to keep being diligent in your prayer life? Where are you tempted to give in and say, “What is the use?” Where do you need help in saying to another, “Please pray for me,” not to lose heart and give up, rather to stay the course and pray for this situation—to pray for our city, to pray for our nation?

Why? Because Jesus is building His Kingdom. He is coming back.

“When we pray something happens. The one who is asking is receiving, the one who is seeking is finding. Finding what? God.” Luke 11:10

“The clearest manifestation of faith, the clearest expression that faith is alive is that it prays. And that it prays until the not-yet is the now and until the unseen is seen.” — Dr. Darrell Johnson

Poem

Nancy Spiegelberg

*Lord I crawled
across the barrenness
to You with my empty cup
Uncertain in asking
any small drop of refreshment
If only I had known You
better I'd have come
Running with a bucket*

Jesus stands and waits, ready to fill your bucket, so that you can truly live today to invest in tomorrow.

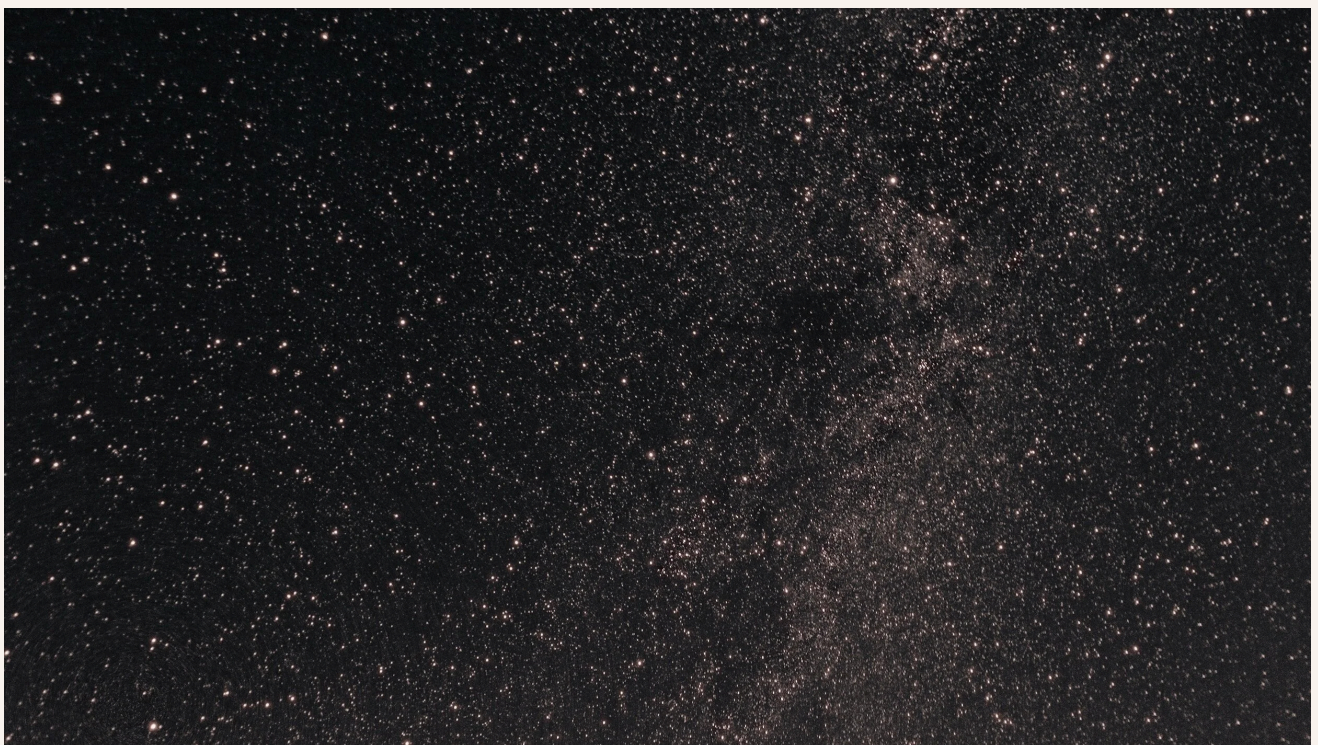
Yes, He has you in the palm of His hands. He will hold you fast.

10 Keep Your Ear On The Rail

In the small country church I grew up in, we never practiced the liturgy of Advent and Lent. Oh, we looked forward to the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, yet it wasn't until my adult years that I was introduced to these two wonderful seasons of Christ.

I love Christmas; however, I am drawn to Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, as it appeals to my penitential spirit—in a season of repentance and renewal. Over 40 days, I am seeking to return my whole heart to God, as I focus on readings, prayer, and reflection, and then a weekly connecting with another sojourner to process what we are hearing from God. It is a time of listening and waiting.

This year, I am anticipating what God wants to teach me.



I have previously shared about a marvellous discovery my friend Jim and I made in our small town of Echo Bay, Ontario. We found that by laying down beside the tracks and placing an ear on the rail, we could hear an approaching train, usually when it was still 20 minutes out. It was intriguing to place a penny on the rail and later collect a very flattened copper after the train had passed.

Though we could not see the train, we sensed it was coming. We listened, waited and anticipated and yes, it always came.


That story captures how I am orientating myself for this 40-day journey of Lent, this year. Let me share what my waiting is focusing on this year, as I keep my ear on the rail.

All of us have been chosen to wait as we live between the “already, though not yet”.



What God has
begun, He will
finish; never
doubt this and
so we act,
listen, wait and
anticipate
during this
interim,
already, but not
yet time.

Here are eight thoughts for you to reflect on:

- 
1. *Already is our world broken by sin, but not yet has it been made new again*
 2. *Already has Jesus come, but not yet has he returned to take us home*
 3. *Already is my sin forgiven, but not yet have I been fully delivered from it*
 4. *Already Jesus reigns, but not yet has His final Kingdom come*
 5. *Already has sin been defeated, but not yet has it been completely destroyed*
 6. *Already do I have the Holy Spirit living within me, but not yet have I been perfectly formed into the likeness of Jesus*
 7. *Already do I have God's Word, but not yet has it totally transformed my life*
 8. *Already do I have God's wonderful grace, but not yet has that grace finished its work in me.*

Yes, as I listen to my ear on the rail, I can sense the vibration of the “but not yet”. Jesus is coming and He is building His Kingdom. And it begins with you and me.

What God has begun, He will finish; never doubt this and so we act, listen, wait and anticipate during this interim, already, but not yet time.

As one author writes, *“Waiting on God is an action based on confident assurance of grace to come.”*

As I look at world events, I see a movement of the Holy Spirit among believers (and there is an increasing desire for more of His Spirit). I hear of people in developing countries coming to Jesus in mass numbers. With my ear on the rail, I sense the “not yet” time coming to fruition.

Let me encourage you to live in light of Heaven and the return of our Redeemer. I feel the vibration in the rail and know it is soon.

Have your ear on the rail.

About

Dr. Bruce Gordon has held numerous leadership roles, including President of Focus on the Family Canada and President of Tyndale University, Toronto. He is a coach, consultant, educator, author and pastor and a resource to many in the Corporate and Ministry sectors and consulted in over 20 Countries.

He and his wife, Denise co founded Mentor Matrix Services Inc in 2001 to assist organizations manage development and growth through maximizing the effectiveness of their people and resources.

Bruce is also a Professional Trainer and Certifier in The Birkman Method.

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If you would like further resources from Dr. Bruce Gordon, or would like to sign up to receive an email devotion, you can visit his website and sign up for a regular newsletter, sent directly to your inbox.

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