

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 9/25/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, September 26 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for those who are unjustly accused and imprisoned. Ask GOD for righteous treatment for all people and guilt not be the first conclusion we come to when someone is accused. Pray that justice and fairness grow in our world for all people equally.*

Do you believe the stuff you read in the Bible? Of course, the things that JESUS said and did seem to be accepted without much question by believers. After all HE was the SON OF GOD, the SAVIOR, and EMMANUEL—GOD MADE FLESH. But what about others like Peter or John or Paul? Do you believe the things they did?

We probably don't even raise that kind of question. We accept these things as true—otherwise, they wouldn't be in the Bible, right? Ordinary people who did extraordinary and even supernatural things. We believe them and want to believe them because of what they mean for our lives and faith. But, a more important question: "Do you believe them for yourself? I don't mean, do you personally believe them? I mean, do you believe that you could do such things or say such things, yourself?"

Why were these folks that we read about able to perform miracles and speak powerfully into the lives of others? Why did they have visions and hear divine messages when we don't? Was it because they had known JESUS personally? Was it a different time and these kinds of things just don't happen anymore?

In truth, we do hear sometimes of great visions received and miraculous acts allegedly performed. How do we react when we hear them? Are we skeptical? Do we dismiss them as doubtful or as the claims of a "nut?" Do we just shrug and move on with our lives?

In biblical times, people didn't have the technological and scientific advances that we have. Did that make it more likely that they would attribute these things to GOD? Or do they make it less likely that we would accept them as GOD'S works today?

Or is GOD just not as active in our world today as GOD was back then?

That's maybe a scarier question. Is GOD just not as involved?

Or could it be that we aren't as focused on or attuned to what GOD is doing today as people were back then? Maybe we've just "evolved" to a point where GOD becomes at best a secondary explanation for what we experience.

What if we tried to see GOD first in the things that happen in our world? Maybe if we paused to ask, "Where is GOD in this?" more often, we would discover GOD'S activity in our lives more frequently. And perhaps, by trusting that GOD is active in our world, and in people's lives, and even through us, we might just see the hand of GOD and hear the voice of GOD in ways which we are currently missing. Science and GOD don't have to be distinct from each other. Science is one of GOD'S creations and helps to explain how GOD is doing things. And coincidence could just be the more modern and skeptical way of explaining what we might better identify if we used the eyes and language of faith.

Give it a try. Ask yourself often, "Is this GOD at work?" or, better yet, "How is GOD at work in this?" You might be surprised to find GOD more regularly in our world and even in your life.

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey