

Touched by the Infinite God

Psalm 16⁷ - *I will bless the Lord who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me.*

Just before Christmas 2013 (I think it was Christmas Eve, but I'm not totally sure) I awoke early at about 4:30 a.m. and couldn't get back to sleep. I can't remember what I was thinking about, but my mind was spinning. After a while I found myself contemplating what it means to be in a relationship with the Almighty God. As I did so, I found myself overwhelmed by His infinite nature. I was transported in my mind and spirit to a hilltop on a perfectly clear night and looked up to see the vastness of the universe spread before me. I knew that this was only a glimpse of the totality of creation and felt a great desire to see and understand more.

As I stood there, I realised that God was revealing something of His infinite nature to me. I was reminded of when Moses asked God to see God's glory, but He would only show his back as to come face to face would have been too much to take for Moses (Exodus 33¹⁸⁻²³). Later I also came to remember when Abraham was told to look up at the stars before being promised that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15⁵).

At this point I must make it clear that I am not equating myself with either Moses or Abraham. I am merely saying that I could identify with their experience of the overwhelming vastness of God. I was coming to a fuller realisation that my finite mind could never contain Him, and that there would never be an end to all that He would reveal to me about Himself, if only I would be open to that revelation.

So where is this taking me? I'm not sure yet but I have been exploring this experience and believe the thoughts below are some of the things He is teaching me. I know that many of my readers will have already gone through this but ask that you will bear with me and that you encourage me with your experience of the infinite God.

Boxes

For some time, I have realised that as we come to explore our relationship with the Father, mankind tends to try and put Him in a box. For each of us, that box may be different. (I am making no judgement here, but merely stating what I see to be a facet of human nature.) For some it will be a box that we keep in a cupboard, only to bring out in an emergency or just for church on a Sunday. Others may never bring it out because they don't believe or want to face the reality of an almighty God. Yet others will use the box to set boundaries for God, only allowing Him to operate in their lives in a way which is comfortable to them or that they can understand, supporting their beliefs by cherry-picking verses from the Bible that seem to fit.

God does not fit in a box. He is infinite, beyond measure and all-encompassing. I have believed this for some time, it is not a new thought but as I considered it, I must confess that I am also guilty of having a God-box or two in my life.

What I then felt that He was showing me is that if I put God in a box, I also put myself in a box. And the me-box is smaller than the God-box because the me-box has to fit inside the God-box. I cannot be greater than Him. He wants me to grow in Him, but I can only do that as I allow my understanding and knowledge of Him to expand and for that I need to take the lid off both the God-box and the me-box.

More recently, I have come to think about other people. I realise that it's too easy to make quick judgements about them and effectively put them into a "box". Yes, as I get to know them better, I may redefine the box, but they still remain in the re-scoped definition of who they are, and it is so often based on assumptions which may or may not be accurate. This can have a negative impact on how I interact with them (or about them with others), either in words or by my reaction/body language. For example, they may suggest that God is telling them to follow a course of action and I think it's not for them. Who am I to judge? By my reaction I may be hindering God's plan for them.

Power and Authority

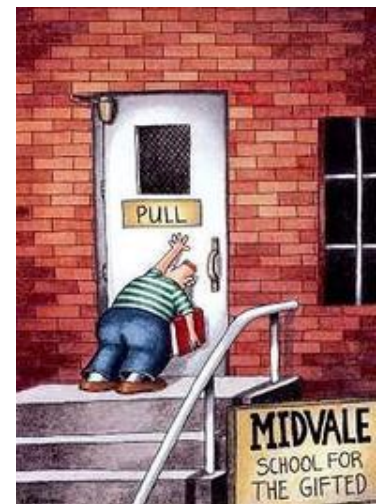
As I have been thinking about this vision of the infinite universe, I am amazed by the way it all fits together and the interdependence of the physical laws that keep it operating. Hebrews 1³ reminds us that it is through the powerful word of the Son that these laws are sustained. Attempting to get my mind around the power and authority that can monitor and maintain the universe overwhelms me. And He chooses to share that power and authority with his followers and co-workers - us! Moved any mountains lately (Matthew 17²⁰)? Neither have I but Matthew 17²⁰ tells us that with a miniscule amount of faith, nothing is impossible.

However, with power and authority comes responsibility.

First, they must not be abused. That seems obvious and the temptation is not to use the power or exercise the authority, the theory being that if they are not used, they cannot be abused. But in the Kingdom's culture, not using them is in itself an abuse. See the parable of the talents (Matthew 25¹⁴⁻³¹). Therefore, we need to continually seek the Spirit's guidance to use them effectively in line with the Father's plans.

My second thought here was that if the Son is maintaining the whole of creation, we have a responsibility to do our bit. Over the Christmas period, Monica and I attended a different church. During the sermon, the preacher quoted from Isaiah that the government will be on His (Jesus') shoulders. If Jesus is the head and we are the body, then we are His shoulders (or at least some of us are) and have a responsibility to govern this world according to His will. I'm still getting my head around this idea, but it's certainly food for thought.

As I try to get my mind around the immensity of the infinite God and what it means to be made in His image, it occurs to me that He wants me to have an infinite perspective. That means that I need to let my mind be transformed. We often talk about "pressing into Jesus" to increase our experience and knowledge of Him. For a few months now I've had a picture going round in my head of someone pushing a swing door to get what God has on the other side. But there is so much inside, it is blocking the door and only a slow trickle gets through the crack. If we pull the door open, rather than pushing, everything can come flooding through. In other words, we need to let Heaven invade our lives. We will discover that it's the friendliest invasion ever. Of course, as everything from God floods in, we need to spend time with Him and discover how we are to use it all for Him.



What Next?

I'm still working on this and am enjoying the voyage of discovery. My current actions are:

- To pray "No more boxes - no boxes for God, no boxes for me, no boxes for others".
- To spend more time exploring what all this means.

Postscript

God isn't interested in me (or you) - He's totally obsessed with me (and you)!

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