

Finding the Smile of God in the Ordinary Glimpsing Infinity Shining through the Everyday

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When thinking about what to talk about my soul kept coming back to.....well what is home to you and me?

Today I am talking about something we were all born to.

Our inheritance

A treasure that connects us all to infinity.

As a toddler my mum tells me my first word was LOOK!!!

Can you imagine a wide eyed toddler curious about everythingfull of wonder and excitement about this fascinating..... brand new world.

I think I just about drove my mum crazy!!! Look mum Look!!! At an ant, grasshopper, sparkling sand, every new thing that entered my world!!!!!!!!!!

We were born with curiosity in our minds.

A need to venture, explore and discover drawing us ever onward.

The joy of discovery, beauty, and creation in our souls

And the closeness and intimacy of sharing that joy in our hearts.

We were born to find joy in

- the shifting and changing colours of the kaleidoscope
- sparkles and diamonds of reflected light
- the breathtaking grandeur of mountain landscapes
- the cuteness of a kitten and quirkiness of a stick insect
- the twinkle in the eye's of laughter

We were born to find joy in

- the soft velvet of a horses nose
- the invigorating chill of entering St Kilda's waves
- the gentle warmth of the sun, the cool breath of a fresh breeze
- a warm embrace, a hand held, a soft touch on the skin

We were born to find joy in

- the sound of a babbling brook

- the song of a bellbird
- Vivaldi's four season's, U2's Gloria, the spinningling voice of a boy soprano
- the soft whisper of a loved one's voice

We were born to find joy in

- the taste of Indian Spices butter chicken
- the sweet tanginess of lemon meringue
- a good coffee

We were born to find joy in

- the smell of home baking
- the sweet perfume of a deep red rose
- talcum powder on a babies bum

We are wired through all of our senses to the beauty of the created all around us both man-made and divine.

Who has seen Avatar?

In a very real sense that movie taps in to our intuitive sense that somehow we are connected to nature. The movie creates fantastic images of beauty, but what is more achingly beautiful is that the intelligent beings could attach their nerve fibers to the nerve fibers of the trees and creatures around them creating the intimate connection with nature we sometimes dream is there.

So what does this mean and what place should we give it in our lives?

Robert Fuller Writes

“Spirituality exists wherever we struggle with the issue of how our lives fit into the greater picture of things. This is true even when our questions never give rise to specific answers or give rise to specific practices such as prayer or meditation. We encounter spiritual issues every time we wonder where the universe comes from, why we are here, or what happens when we die. We also become spiritual when we are moved by values such as beauty, love or creativity that seem to reveal a meaning or power beyond our visible world. An idea or practice is “spiritual” when it reveals our personal desire to establish a felt – relationship with the deepest meanings or powers governing life”

In Romans 1.19 Paul says

“They know everything that can be known about God, because God has shown it to them. God's eternal power and character can't be seen. But from the beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all that he has made.”

I think **Job 12: 7-10** answers this well

“But ask the animals, they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will teach you: or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.”

Thomas Moore writes

“There are a great many gardens in the world, of literature and poetry, of painting and music, of religion and architecture, all make the point as clear as possible: the soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden. If you don’t want paradise, you are not human; and if you are not human, you don’t have a soul.”

So you see that creation and creativity calls to our souls and the very fiber of our beings saying there is something more.

In a way beauty can be painful for it shows up how we so fall short of what beauty is telling us. The world around us is so stunningly beautiful at times it makes our hearts ache for something better.

That something better is to be able to know the creator – to share both the joy and the pain with the creator.

For in knowing the creator we are free to share the joy of creation with Him/Her. We can say “Look universe maker look” and each new discovery can be shared, each new discovery enriches our relationship with the creator, each new discovery finds its meaning and purpose in a relationship with the creator.

Mitsugi Saotome

“If you are all alone in the universe with no one to talk to, no one with which to share the beauty of the stars, to laugh , to touch what would be the purpose of life? It is other life; it is love, which gives your life meaning. This is harmony. We must discover the joy of each other, the joy of challenge, the joy of growth.”

That is why **John chapter one** is such amazingly good news for you and me.

In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God

From the very beginning the Word was with God.

And with this Word, God created all things.

Nothing was made without the Word.

*Everything that was created
received its life from him,*

*And his life gave light to everyone.
The light keeps shining in the dark,
and the dark and darkness has never put it out.
God sent a man named John,
who came to tell about the light
and to lead all people to have faith
The true light that shines on everyone
was coming to the world.
The Word was in the world
But no one knew him, though God made the world with his Word
He came in to his own world
but his own nation did not accept him.
Yet some people accepted him
and put their faith in him.
So he gave them the right to be the children of God.
They were not Gods children by nature
Or because of any human desires.
God himself was the one
Who made them his children.
The Word became a human being
and lived here with us.
We saw his true glory
The glory of the only son of the Father
From him all the kindness and all the truth of God has come down to us.
Because of all the Son is, we have been given one blessing after another.
The Law was given by Moses, but Jesus bought us undeserved kindness
and truth. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and
closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like.*

So we now see that creation is the art, the expression, the “Word” of God.

That God wanted us to come to him through seeing creation.

That we would be inspired by his creativity and the expression of himself through nature to seek him out ...to have a felt relationship with the creator. To re-find our life and light in Him.

The trouble is this is not enough to change us – we still find ways of destroying ourselves and creation. Even laws cannot change our hearts. So God’s expression of his very being, the Word became a wonderful awesome human being so that we could really, really get to know him.

His name is Jesus and he is full of kindness and truth. Only in knowing someone so truly amazing and relating to him can we be changed through our love and relationship with him.

This is **SO** good news.

Because Jesus is expressed through a human being and creation we can get to know him through his creation and get an even bigger picture of who he is and what he is like. God loves us so much he has made himself known both through Creation and through Jesus. He wants a real relationship where he is known and loved for who he is. The truth really sets us free to celebrate and find a shared joy with both God and Jesus through **ALL** of creation. How good is that!!!

Knowing this changes everything!!! In fact it is an amazingly liberating Worldview and one so big we will never stop growing in it.

I want you to stop a moment and put the cellophane over your eyes.....

I used to love doing this as a child for it is fascinating how it changes everything. When we look at creation we can now see it in a totally new light, the whole world and our relationship to it can be different.

Now we can know and have a real relationship with God, we can also share creation and creativity with him in a totally new way. We know he loves us and wants a relationship with us and what better way to do this than to share the joy of his creation and creativity with him/her.

All throughout the bible there are references to the whole of creation grieving for God and celebrating its freedom when in the right relationship with him. The Trees of the Field will clap their hands, even the stones will cry out..... Once you start looking you will see it. We can celebrate God alongside the rest of creation whom he has given, breath, life and light.

“I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station, through which God speaks to us every hour, if only we will tune in”

George Washington Carver

*“To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
An eternity in an hour.”*

William Blake

Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.”

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

This brings me to the title of my sermon.....

“Finding the Smile of God in the ordinary
Glimpsing infinity shining through the everyday”

In reality how do we do this?

How do make a habit of using our new vision everyday?

The wonderful thing is that God’s beauty can be seen all around us in creation, in the creations of our fellow man/woman, and in human beauty and relations. And it is all free. We don’t need to own it to enjoy it.

I shall talk about my experience and how I create habits that assist me to see the smile of God.

Daily routines – feed the birds, daily bread in the quiet , walking out through the garden, enjoying the people on the bus, walking to work on the lookout in the window of the art gallery, seeing people on the street, touching the tank with the beautiful goldfish in it and thinking they are not worried, etc especially walking home is really good.

By bringing little reminders of creativity and beauty into my surroundings. Flowers in the house, creating a lovely garden, having a bird feeder, bringing paua shells home, kina, rocks etc; having reminders in every room of my life including work. Monet postcards, frogs , glass, feathers. My most favourite reminder at the moment isthis diary- isn't it amazing?... I have enjoyed it all weekall I had to do was say, could I choose my own diary rather than the black one work was going to get me ..so work paid for this one instead. This is something I carry with me all the time so I can share with God a joy in his creation. When I look at it I feel a sense of excitement and joy rising within me like a little child discovering something and sometimes I smile..... and a lot of the time I say Look Look !!!

You have a piece of paper in front of you with three questions on it to assist you to think about how to create your own space to enjoy creation with the creator.

What things get in the road of me enjoying God's creation and creativity?

What aspects of God's creation and creativity feed my soul?

What can I change to make this more part of my day?

Morning

God I am awake, this I
my eyes are open.
My heart beats. My lungs work.
Here and now I have
this sacred gift of me
which is about to unwrap
a second gift,
the gift of a bright new day.

I see the day before me, fresh,
untouched by yesterday
and free of tomorrow

Will it also become sacred
with my unwrapping?

God, may I receive all of the gift
Of this bright new day
without judgement or prejudice.

May my vision be clear enough
to see beauty in everything.

May I greet each moment
in its uniqueness and say thank you
for the opportunities to learn.

And God, may I not forget to give
the child in me some space to sing and dance with all the little
miracles
that announce your presence

If it so happens
that I am clumsy in the unwrapping,
if I drop or break something
then remind me , God
to be gentle with myself.

There will be another gift tomorrow.....Amen

“Finding the Smile of God in the ordinary Glimpsing infinity shining through the everyday”

What things get in the road of me enjoying Gods creation and creativity in the
everyday and the ordinary as well as in the exceptional?

What aspects of God’s creation and creativity feed my soul?

What can I change to make this an integral part of my day?

**“My profession is always to be alert, to find God in nature, to know God’s
lurking places, to attend to all the oratorios and the operas in nature.”
Henry David Thoreau**