

The River Ran Backwards

By Van Yandell

John 7: 37-38 “ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

The morning was cool but pleasant. I walked out onto the pier under the Brooklyn Bridge with my early morning coffee. The New York skyline cast shadows over the city, I felt totally alone and susceptible. We were working with a Christian disaster relief group providing meals for first responders and victims.

The scene of that September morning in 2001 included smoke off the site of the collapsed World Trade Center towers. It had been five days since the terrorist attack on America.

The smoke continued to rise off the rubble and the thoughts of the lives lost troubled my soul. The dead are dead but their families were in extreme grief. Not knowing for sure what has happened to a loved one is horrible but to consider the circumstances of their death sets the heart and mind beyond its normal limits.

Sea gulls floated by as if being uplifted by an unseen force emanating off the water of the East River. Not a river, it bears the name. Actually it is a salt-water tidal estuary or strait connecting the Atlantic Ocean in two places.

Finally my eyes cast down toward the water and the thought besieged my mind, “The river was running the other direction yesterday! Am I going mad? What’s happening?”

In a few seconds the realization came forth, the tide was going out; whereas yesterday it was coming in. Being from western Kentucky, my ability to comprehend the tides was limited and came only from text books.

A river running backwards happened on February 7, 1812. When the New Madrid fault slipped on that date, the Mississippi River ran backwards for several hours forming Reelfoot Lake in northwest Tennessee. That quake is estimated to have been as high as 8.2 on the Richter scale.

Water in volumes too large to accurately determine, exerts tremendous force. The energy produced by tides exceeds all the energy produced by mankind every second of every day. To harness that energy is another matter.

Tidal energy is currently being used in a few locations around the world, most notably at the Sihwa Lake Tidal Power Station in South Korea and La Rance, France, which is the oldest large-scale tidal power station still in operation.

The awareness of tidal potential as a renewable and economical source of energy has long existed but the initial cost of tidal power plants is mostly prohibitive. Perhaps in the future, the tides will be utilized to decrease the use of fossil fuels which some believe is a major factor in climate change.

Life on earth could not exist without water. Genesis 1: 2 tells us, “The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” We know that water is one of the essential components for God’s creation process.

The combining of carbon based matter (Genesis 1: 1), water (Genesis 1: 2) and light (Genesis 1: 3), the process of photosynthesis happens. With that, chlorophyll is produced, of which a by-product is oxygen.

We humans inhale oxygen to be distributed by our lungs into our blood which in turn feeds the thirty trillion cells in our bodies. On

the return trip through our veins the residue left (carbon dioxide) is exhaled into the atmosphere which provides for plants the fuel to produce more chlorophyll thus more oxygen.

God was the first recycler and it appears He thought of everything. I suppose that’s why He’s God.

Considering the power of moving water and that water is essential for photosynthesis and human survival, we can understand why Jesus emphasized water in His teachings.

John 4: 13 “Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

At times it seems as if the church, like the East River, is running backwards. The church as Jesus intended it to

be has in many cases lost its focus. Matthew 16: 18 “That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

That statement by Jesus indicates one and only one church. His church has been severely fragmented and divided by denominationalism which is a result of individual thinking. Religionists have taken it upon themselves to distort the words of our Savior/Creator.

We cannot rewrite the scriptures and expect it to go unnoticed. Revelation 22 18b-19a “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.”

The perversion of the originally intended

church goes far beyond the corruption of the scriptures. Churches are not to be social clubs or entertainment centers. Speakers are not to preach what has lately been dubbed as “feel good” preaching.

Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross for the remission of the sins of all mankind was nothing to take lightly and celebrate as the winning of a ball game. Jesus’ death and resurrection changed the history of the world as no other event, ever!

We often wonder why the church is in decline in America. Perhaps these are a part of the reasons. We must preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and adhere to His teachings and not let this river run backwards.

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Between You and Me x 2

By Monty Carter

Burden Bearing

“Burden-bearing” is so counter-cultural. And yet for Christ followers it is not optional. The Apostle Paul admonished the divided Galatians to bear one another’s burdens. To bear the burden of another is a great privilege. It is other-focused in a world constantly touting “self”. The self-consumed have no room for it. Pride and arrogance will not allow it. It requires humility and compassion. You can’t be full of yourself when you bear others’ burdens. There isn’t enough space.

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6:2)

We need more of it in our broken world. Burden-bearing doesn’t mean we can fix it. It doesn’t enable either. It also speaks truth in love. It simply lets the one who’s burdened know they are not alone or forgotten. Think about that last sentence. To carry a burden all by yourself is a painful and lonely thing. But when someone offers to come alongside and help you become stronger. You are encouraged. It doesn’t mean the burden magically disappears, but it means you are no longer alone on that ledge. Someone else has skin in the game. And real burden-bearers are in it for the long haul. They don’t cut and run. They are faithful even if they become frustrated.

When I think of this discipline, I think of mothers. Mothers are burden-bearing experts. Do you remember, or have you ever watched, a small child skin their knee in the park? They run to Mom, and chances are she was running toward them before they got off the ground. I marvel at my precious daughter-in-law’s ability to do this with four daughters! Grandparents are “super burden-bearers”. There is very little they won’t do for a beloved grandchild. I’ve watched the hardest of men and most stoic of women melt in the presence of their grandchildren.

Years ago, as a high school senior, I was struggling. I had left a note for my Mom before I went to work. I shared that I was on an emotional roller-coaster, which I’m sure was of my own making. My Mom knew she couldn’t carry it for me. But she gave me great advice in a note that still resides in the Bible of my youth. She was an RN in the ICU and worked nights. Before she left for work, she left the note on my pillow, on top of my Bible, which she had opened to Romans 8:26. When I got home late from work, I found her wise counsel and precious advice. She acknowledged (and validated) my struggle and that if she could, she would remove it. But she admitted it was far above her ability. She told me the One who loved me even more than she could carry my burden, and all I had to do was cry out to Him in prayer. And then she noted the verse in Romans: “It is up to you to pray to Him for help, and if you don’t know what to say, read Romans 8:26 for the most beautiful prayer promise ever made.” I was alone in the house; I shut my bedroom door, knelt, read that promise, and cried out to God. Suddenly, I felt the presence of God. My struggle was still there, but I was no longer alone.

You aren’t alone in your burden either. There is One who wants to share your burden. We just have to lean in. If you don’t have a trusted burden-bearer, press into Jesus. He can handle whatever you got. I know because over these many years I’ve dumped a ton of junk in His lap. You know who the best burden-bearers are? People who have carried and shared their burdens with others. You don’t have to be an expert in psychology, theology, or human behavior. Just be present. The ministry of presence is an amazing thing.

Agape, Monty

Correction

In the August 5 issue of the Sturgis News, we printed several pictures of a US Navy plane from 1963. The name of the YouTube show on which the US Navy plane will be featured was stated incorrectly. The plane will be featured on Plane Crazy Life. Cole Gaither was the gentleman in a photo with the plane and was the person transporting it to Florida.

Watch For Warning Signs Of Social Isolation

Human beings are wired for social connection, but millions of people confront isolation every day. Many of those people are seniors who lose contact with loved ones as time goes by. While temporary loneliness can be tolerated, prolonged isolation can be very harmful.

Research by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found roughly one-quarter of American adults age 65 and older live in isolation. Identifying the early warning signs of isolation may help to prevent the physiological and psychological toll isolation can take.

Here are some signs of social isolation to watch for.

- Withdrawal from events: An early indicator of social isolation, according to Healthline, is a pattern of canceling plans, not answering phone calls, and withdrawing from established social circles or hobbies.
- Self-care is not prioritized: Another sign of social isolation is personal hygiene and other self-care habits like eating nutritious meals becomes neglected. It can signal that a person’s routine has changed due to a lack of social accountability.
- Home upkeep falters: A person who is withdrawing from social connections may feel it’s no longer necessary to keep a home clean and tidy since they don’t anticipate visitors.
- Irritability and low mood: Persistent isolation can trigger a sense of hopelessness. Individuals may become defensive or experience dramatic shifts in mood and sleep patterns, according to Healthline.
- Reliance on social media or television: Socially isolated individuals may turn to television or non-interactive social media scrolling as a proxy for human interaction, offers HealthDirect.

Individuals are urged to check in with friends, family or neighbors they suspect may be isolating to provide the companionship and help they may need.

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