

Victoria Falls

This morning I went to the largest waterfall in the world, Victoria Falls here in Livingstone, Zambia, Africa - considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. I thought this would be a wonderful place to begin my walk with God just before daybreak. The Scripture says, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge"* (Psalm 19:1,2). Dr. David Livingstone was the first European to set eyes on the falls, called by the natives, *Mosi-oa-tunya* ("The Smoke that Thunders"). In honor of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, he named it for her.

I was standing on the eastern edge of the falls when the sun came bursting over the horizon, illuminating the cavernous opening where mega tons of water were falling at somewhere between 700 and 800 feet down to the river below. Once the sunlight hit the canyon we were graced with the most beautiful rainbow that reached from the sky into the deepest area of the canyon below. I was caught up in the awe and splendor of one of earth's most beautiful sights at one of earth's most beautiful moments. Three thoughts came to me while meditating.

1. The Wonder in His Thunder

Have you ever wondered what the voice of the Lord will sound like when we get to Heaven? The Word of God gives us a clue, for in Revelation 1:15 when John saw Him, it says, *"...and his voice as the sound of many waters."* Then later in the book it reads, *"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder..."* (Revelation 14:2). The original name of Victoria Falls means, "The Smoke that Thunders." Therefore, I could not help but think as I stood in front of the largest falls in the world, that there was something similar to what I was hearing and the voice of God. First of all, it was a majestic sound. When a King speaks, people listen. Secondly, it was an all-encompassing sound. You can hear it from a long distance away. And even on Earth although we don't hear the audible voice of God, we can feel the thunder of its certainty when it sounds. You can feel the vibration of the falling thunder of a mighty waterfall; so also you can sense when God is speaking. Unlike a high pitched annoying and even painful sound, no matter how loud the waterfall sounded, although all-encompassing, it provided a comfortable sound to the ear, not deafening. God speaks in Isaiah 40:1, *"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God"* (Isaiah 40:1). Today I pray for those in our midst who are hurting, that they will hear the voice of the Lord as the sound of many waters and be comforted.

2. The Promise in His Promises

As sun-up burst forth and I saw how the morning light was captured in the prism of the mist rising from the falls, I was overwhelmed! The sun was on my right, the moon was on my left and right in the middle was the rainbow! Immediately the Scripture came to mind of when and why the first rainbow was given and what it was to forevermore be a reminder to us: *"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth"* (Genesis 9:13-16). God was saying, I will never destroy Earth by water again. Every time I see the rainbow, I say to myself, "The Promiser keeps His promises!" Every promise God gives is true! The Bible says, *"...God, that cannot lie..."* (Titus 1:2). God's veracity is again affirmed when His Word declares, *"...it was impossible for God to lie..."* (Hebrews 6:18).

I sense strongly that today somebody reading these words needs to be reminded that God keeps His promises. The Lord promised us a cross if we would follow Him, but He also promised that His yoke would be easy and His burden would be light (Matthew 11:30). He never promised that we wouldn't fall, but He did promise that He would catch us if we did. *"Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand"* (Psalm 37:24). He did not promise that we would never doubt and struggle in our faith, but He did promise to stay faithful to us during our trial. *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"* (Luke 22:31,32). *"...God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"* (I Corinthians 10:13). *"...Great is thy faithfulness"* (Lamentations 3:23).

3. The Maze of His Ways

Finally, in my closing time of prayer out at the waterfall, I was astounded to see what looked like a "pouring up" rain. You read those words right, I did not say, "pouring down" rain, I said, "pouring up." You see, once that mighty water hit the canyon below with such velocity, much of the water bounced up from the rocks below and ascended straight up in the air. As I was getting sprayed with the upward rising water, I thought, this is the first time I have ever gotten wet from rain coming up from the ground rather than down from the sky. And the passage came to mind, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8). Even as in nature God can surprise us, He has many times surprised me by operating in ways I had not premeditated. A maze is a network of paths and hedges designed as a puzzle through which one has to find a way. Often times we trust God and we seem to be led on a "wild goose chase." There is

always a design to God's plan and He often doesn't give us the privilege of knowing what it is all about until a later time. We have to sometimes say, "His ways are not my ways, and therefore I choose His ways." He did promise that it would all work together for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28). The key to contentment is to understand that all things are working "together." Don't isolate the set of circumstances in your life and judge God by our little puny frame of reference. Your situation is never beyond help and has never become hopeless. If God can make it rain upwards, He can lead you through the maze He has allowed you to walk through. You will find the maze will become an amazing work of grace as you patiently wait for Him to tell you, "*...This is the way, walk ye in it...*" (Isaiah 30:21).

-Pastor Pope-