
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

March 22, 2015

Beachcombing

*“I consider everything a loss in comparison with the superior value of knowing
Christ Jesus my Lord. I have lost everything for him,
but what I lost I think of as sewer trash, so that I might gain Christ.”*
Philippians 3:8 (Common English Bible)

Beachcombing has become one my favorite activities that I share with my wife. The treasure that is freely presented by the sea changes with every wave that washes ashore. Rare pieces of sea glass, interesting stones and shells, and the occasional piece of driftwood provide a most fascinating diversion from the daily tasks and responsibilities that can consume any of us. Collecting unusual pieces and sharing what I have found with my wife helps me unwind and slip out of my day-to-day routine. Worries fade for both of us as we become caught-up in the fascination of discovery.

There is also trash and dangerous sea life that washes ashore. Broken glass with sharp edges and jellyfish tend to present the greatest danger to bare feet on the beach. Most beaches provide a purple flag to alert those walking the edge of the surf to the presence of dangerous sea life. This is helpful, of course, but the eye must remain sharp to see other harmful items that wash ashore such as nails, needles and sharp pieces of metal. Placing the bare foot upon any of these changes one's mood and diminishes an otherwise beautiful day. Worries that had faded are replaced with other worries.

What is important is developing a sharp eye to discern between treasure and trash, what is a collectable and what is dangerous. Our spiritual lives require the same discernment. What we collect in life will either draw us closer to God or lead us away. Particularly in the midst of the craziness of life, busy schedules and the need to multitask, we must exercise care to carry God with us. Otherwise, we may discover one day that we have spent our life gathering those things that have little value. Worse, we may realize that we completely missed the true treasure – a life-filling relationship with Jesus.

Paul doesn't want us to miss the treasure. So he makes a sharp distinction between what he once considered valuable and now knowing Christ. By comparison to Christ Jesus, everything else is little more than “sewer trash”. Perhaps this is hyperbole. Perhaps it isn't. What is important is that as Paul walks the shores of life, he now understands the difference between what has value and what doesn't. And he urgently wants us to know the same.

Prayer: Dear Lord, it is so easy to mistake trash for treasure, to spend our lives gathering the wrong thing. By the instruction of Your word each day, direct my vision to those things that have true value. Amen.

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