

Snippets From KeyCom
June 2024
O Lord, You're Beautiful!

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

While there is joy and satisfaction in ministry, it can also be debilitating. While writing to the Corinthians, Paul mentions the pressure of his concern for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28). Even Jesus had to urge the Apostles to take a break from ministry and get some rest in a quiet place (Mark 6:31).

I didn't realize how much I needed a break until Fawn and I took a vacation a few days ago. We spent the better part of a week camped next to a lake near the Trinity Alps in northern California. As there was no Internet or phone service, we were cut off from the rest of the world. It was heavenly! No one could reach us with their problems. There were no classes to teach, no services to conduct, no projects to oversee, no counseling sessions, no scripts to edit, no deadlines to meet, no hassles with technology or with personnel. We could just kick back, relax and enjoy visiting with family. Most of all, we could allow nature to spread its healing balm over our frayed nerves and recharge our depleted stores of energy.

Once again we marveled at the sheer beauty of God's Creation. At our elevation of 6,000 feet, Spring had not yet given way to Summer. The creeks were full. Every night the frogs sang their chorus. Everywhere we looked millions of flowers in stunning variety were in full bloom. Insects buzzed, yet the breeze kept mosquitoes from being too much of a problem. Ants excavated their nests. Birds trilled. Ground squirrels skittered along. Fish jumped in the lake which reflected the cliff and snowbanks on the other side. At night the moon was so brilliant it cast shadows while we had a view of the stars which city lights obscure.

The Apostle Paul writes that we can clearly see some of God's otherwise invisible qualities by means of the Creation. He mentions God's eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:20). Though Paul does not mention it specifically, I think nature also reveals another of God's qualities. Though man's sin has ravaged and distorted our world (Romans 8:18-22) we are still surrounded by beauty. How can the beauty around us not reflect the beauty of the One who created it? The beauty of nature should create a longing in us to see God's beauty. As it says in Psalms, "One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple." (Psalm 27:4 NIV)

While Fawn and I reveled in what we saw, it also brought to mind another camping experience my family had when we lived in Pakistan. A couple of years before we returned to the States, we camped for a few weeks in the upper Kaghan Valley in the Himalaya Mountains. There, too, we were surrounded by beauty. But not everyone could see it. We met a family who were bored out of their skulls. While we enjoyed all kinds of nature-related activities, they complained there was nothing to do. The landscape had no appeal to them. They couldn't wait to cut their stay short

and return to the lights, the crowds and the hustle and bustle of a resort town. They much preferred the passing pleasures of 'civilization' to an encounter with God's divine character by means of nature. In fact, they were blind to the Creation and what it could teach them.

On that same trip we encountered another reaction. Far from being oblivious to his surroundings, a different man saw nature alright, but he was terrified by it. He was awed by the evidence of God's power but he could not fathom that nature also displays God's love, consistency and care for mankind. In him I could easily see the urge that many have to treat nature as a living force which must be placated or appeased. Like the other family this man also was blind to the beauty of God.

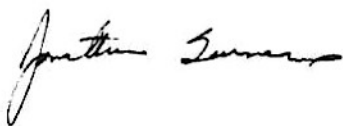
If nature isn't enough to open peoples' eyes to the beauty of the Lord, then what will? In short, it is the Gospel. Jesus quoted a text from Isaiah as His mission statement while speaking in the synagogue at Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19 NIV) Notice that Jesus came, in part, to give "sight to the blind."

Jesus commissioned Paul to do the same thing. Jesus told him that he was to, "open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light." (Acts 26:18 NIV)

Turning people from darkness to light; opening their eyes to the beauty of the Lord is what we're all about here at Key Communications. It's why so many of our programs are expository – explaining the Bible text. It's why I spend so much time teaching, writing and developing resources for our brothers in Pakistan to use in their ministries. It's why we've provided audio Bibles to those who can't read the Word for themselves. It is our hope and prayer that people will be able to see the beauty of the Lord not only through what we produce but also reflected in our lives and how we interact with them. As the old hymn says, "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, All His wonderful passion and purity..."

Thank you for helping make it possible for us to open peoples' eyes to the beauty of the Lord!

Yours in the most beautiful Name,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Turner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Turner