

fragments

*memories & reflections
on faith & life*

***Jesus said, 'My words are
spirit and they are life.'***
(John 6:63)

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I have a memory. The details at this time are vague, but the light of that morning, the air, the water, glisten in my mind, touch my heart.

I was about eight years old, and my mom had said we could get up early, me, my brother, and about four friends, and she would take us to the beach across the harbor, and swim before breakfast. I remember the ocean water that morning was like glass. The sky was perfect and promising. The air was fresh. We swam, we dried off, we walked back home before the day had begun. And yet we had already conquered the day, the whole day.¹

¹ Turns out this was in Bahía Blanca, Argentina, about 1983.

Ever-present

I was thinking back this morning on my teen years. I was wayward, until Jesus revealed himself in a deep and fresh way to my soul, to my mind. But up to that point – a very specific spiritual encounter at the age of sixteen – I was victim to the moment. What I mean by this is that whatever was in front of me any given day, had the biggest influence, had the moral advantage. So it did matter 100% where I went and who I was with, because I had no anchor in my soul. Every wind blew me, every wave moved me.

When Jesus weighed in on me, pressed in a 'call to action' on the revelation he had invested in me, I was stopped. I was anchored. I now had a conviction and a Spirit in me, upon me, that was stronger than the winds of the world. It spoke louder and truer. Jesus a friend. It is important to know that he is a friend. His presence is not one of Law, but of grace and truth. His presence is truer than the temptations of the world, than the values of the world, than the promises of the world.

So now with an '***ever-present help in times of trouble***', I'm no longer victim to the present. I'm no longer tossed by the winds of life, but rather I *bring* a wind of the Holy Spirit with me, through me.

'He who is in you, is greater than he who is in the world.' (1 John 4:4)

I've been freed from the tyranny of life's meandering ways, because I walk with Jesus, **'the way, the truth...'** (John 14:6) I have a 'way', I have a true friend, I have a power and a purpose, an anchor and a map.

'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.'
(Psalm 46:1-2)¹

¹ For more on my personal testimony, see the book *'Alone With God'*, on the *'Books'* tab at: www.1peter1three.weebly.com

The end of the line

Sometimes when I talk to the poor about Jesus, I'm aware that the message will stop here. It will not go to and 'through' this person, but rather simply arrive and stay with this person. It comes to a stop here.

Very often what energizes me is the idea of sharing the gospel – the '**power of God**' – with people who can, in turn, take it to others, and on and on it goes, it reaches... I'm inspired by the ultimate 'take-over' of God, when:

'The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.'
(Habakkuk 2:14)

But when I actually reach that person who cannot, will not reach another, and the message will stay with them until they depart the earth, I sometimes wonder... I wonder at the point of reaching this soul, where no fruit of real ministry will be seen, no church planted, no neighborhood reached, no charity work established...

I'm just being honest here. I can – and will now – break down why this way of seeing things, and feeling, is not truthful, but if I'm honest about the *tendencies* of my feelings, the 'natural' way I see things, well, it is along these lines. I want big impact, big results, big 'evidence', of my efforts and sacrifices. I want bang for buck. I want to

see the fruit, and I want my work to stand like a tower for others to see

Two things on this, to address this struggle in me.

First, souls *are* the prize. The real 'reach' of God is not just this or that community or political system. In fact, I often see old church buildings – i.e. established Christian presence on the earth – emptied and refurbished into, for example, an insurance company. (*This is a real example, I used to drive by this building often.*)

So in the case of this example, the church is no more, and the building, in fact, now looks more like a mockery of the faith than a reminder of it. The cross on the steeple is gone, and it's now a market place. Jesus wouldn't even turn the tables in here, because they aren't claiming to be a temple. No. The temple is no more, just money-changing.

This is a depressing picture if – and only if – people, in the building of a church, are really believing that the presence of this church, the physical structure of this church, is the ultimate victory. Christianity is present! This community is reached! If we think like this (*in building our churches, charities, mission trips, tee-shirts, badges, tracts and books*), then yes, to see the abandoned buildings and forgotten ministries, is depressing.

But, if we think of building the kingdom of God as

'one soul at a time', that souls are 'bricks', and 'living stones'; if we think of reaching a person as building the 'house of God', well, not only can buildings be abandoned by believers, but bodies deserted by their spirits, and the victory has still been won, the kingdom advanced.

'You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house...' (1 Peter 2:5)

'You are members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.'
(Ephesians 2:19-22)

'For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and our joy.'
(1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

So we most definitely labor to establish places on earth that are gateways to the gospel – be it a church, a mission, a school, a book – but our aim is to attain the eternal, i.e. souls. Our focus is 'spirit', as Jesus said about his own words and reach:

'The flesh counts for nothing. My words are

spirit and they are life. (John 6:63)

A so-called 'Christian' building is nothing other than an encasement for the Spirit of God to reach the spirits of mankind, through the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, many a 'Christian' building has not only been devoid of these purposes of God, but become places of immorality and hidden sin, dishonoring to God.

This is nothing new. When we put bricks and mortar on anything spiritual, it runs a high risk of becoming an idol or even a hiding place for evil. It was in the temple built by Solomon, under the instruction of God and the materials gathered by king David, that the people plotted the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

We journey here. We do not invest here. Much like the Israelites journeyed through the desert. They pitched tents, lived life and worshipped God, but they would pick up their tents and move on. There was no trace of their place after they moved on. There was no inheritance that 'stuck'. The only lasting thing with them, in them, was their faithfulness to God each day, and when he moved, they moved. This was their legacy. It was invisible, as it were, when they looked back over their shoulders – because all had been picked up and moved on.

Jesus said, ***'No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.'*** (Luke 9:62)

Like children – God’s favorite people regarding outlook on life¹ – we can and must delight in what God provides, and what he allows us to build here on his beautiful earth. But we must always ***‘live by faith and not by sight.’*** (2 Corinthians 5:7) It is with faith – and not physical achievements – that we ***‘please God’.*** (Hebrews 11:6) It is where his truth and Word actually ‘live’ in us, and through us, his Spirit touching spirit, that God delights.

Before I go onto my second point here (and it will be much shorter than the first), I leave you with these three sobering, and yet invigorating verses:

‘Abraham was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.’ (Hebrews 11:10)

‘Here we do not have a lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.’ (Hebrews 13:14)

‘So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.’ (2 Corinthians 4:18)

Secondly (regarding why I *should* delight in reaching the poor, sharing the gospel, with that person at the very end of the line): God rewards

¹ Matthew 18:3

the unseen.

Three times in Matthew chapter 6 Jesus says to do things in secret, because **'Your Father in heaven, who is in secret, sees what you do in secret and will reward you.'**

Jesus often rebuked the religious leaders of the day who he said did things – good, religious things – for show. He said in doing this, they had received their reward.

Jesus left the 99 sheep, the safe and the saved, to seek out and save the lost one. The lost one, at the end of the earth, the end of the line, was the VIP.

Jesus' system, his kingdom, is completely the reverse of our world system. Jesus said that the world system builds upwards and **'lords it over'** those who are beneath; but he said this is not the case in his kingdom, his system. He said, **'The greatest among you will be your servant.'** (Matthew 23:11)

The deep challenge of Christ is life by 'faith' and not by 'sight'. My accomplishments are 'sight', but my secret faith and prayers and sacrifices are 'faith'. Jesus promises over and over that he will reward faith, and that our **'work will be shown for what it is'** on that final Day. (1 Corinthians 3:13) But here and now, the challenge in walking with Jesus is all things Spirit. It is letting go of that vice grip on identity,

on possessions, on accolades and accomplishments. We're not talking about false humility here (if someone honors you for something, receive it with thanks and enjoy!). No, false humility is worse than pride – it's like pride that won't even own up. No, I'm talking about that honest, onward walk with Jesus even when we can't quite understand where things are at, can't really feel the worth or the joy, and yet we whisper - because we can no longer 'sing' – the name of Jesus. We still choose to sit with him a while, pray with him a while. We decide, despite our discouragement or sorrow, that we will not **'take offense on account of Christ'**, and we will walk on with him. Because he is a friend. He is with us. He does love us. And he does lead us besides streams of water, and restore our soul.¹

¹ Matthew 6:2; 11:6; Luke 15:1-7

Capacity

I have insecurities. Or I'm insecure in different ways. All of the above. I feel insecure, sometimes, when I'm in a group of Christians. I mean, this type of gathering – church, conference, home group – is a safe place, a gift to us here on earth, but it also triggers me a little. I can see two things that contribute to this.

First, I was brought up a 'missionary kid', so I was always moving and living in unique situations, and in a unique relationship to the secular world and the Christian world.

In the secular world, i.e. just going to school, dealing with people and neighbors and the community that were not Christians, well, I was just one of the crowd. If I did 'stand out' in any way – like in sport or socially – it was by merit of just 'worldly' traits, like anyone else. Also, you see, the secular world was my parents' mission field, the harvest field. That was where we worked, so to speak. Our role in the faith was to 'fish men', to connect with people and share Jesus with them. So to be 'in the world' was to be in work.

But when we as a family would visit America – or really any church or conference for the purposes of my parents' support network, or training events, etc. – at these Christian gatherings my dad, a street preacher, was kind of a 'celebrity'. He had stories to tell of preaching on the streets

all over the world, and some adventures along the way. He usually was the guest speaker, and we would be like little VIPs at these events, people inviting us back to their homes for lunch and some fun. We were hosted. We were always special.

So when in the world, I was at work. When at Christian gatherings, I was a little celeb', by virtue of my parents' ministry and sacrifices. And so fast-forward to adulthood, when I'm not in the shadow or covering of my parents' ministry, well, I gather with believers and I'm just another family member. I'm not at work – i.e. evangelizing or trying to win them to the faith – and I'm not 'known' or set apart as special. I'm one of the fam'. Rather than being asked all about myself, well, I'm really there, like everyone else, to **'consider others better than myself'**, and to ask them about *their* lives, to serve them.

So a gathering of believers can be a space of feeling insignificant, like I don't have a 'job' to do (evangelize), and I don't have a special identity. This can make me feel a little lost, a little lonely, a little insecure.

Secondly, related to above point, is really just my pride. I lack humility. You see, Jesus doesn't call anyone insignificant or lesser, just because they are not in the limelight. But if the spotlight is not on me, I feel like there is *no* light on me. This comes from a type of pridefulness or need to be special. And pride is really at the core, the base

of my type of insecurity. But Jesus doesn't condemn me here, he has just enlightened me a tad!

I'm growing in this area, growing a little more secure. God is teaching me about true significance, the true uniqueness of an individual. It comes from God directly, the fact that he made – and only he can make – every soul and human being. Every person is a unique miracle of God, a unique expression of God, and their significance is beyond tracing out. God is also teaching me that the 'good works' and 'love' of people that builds someone's legacy, is not the 'seen' stuff. Ninety-nine percent of our developed character in Christ is done **'in secret'**. It is not what we do in the eyes of people, nor what people see and praise. Even if the limelight swings your way, this does not mean the light of God's favor or approval is shining through it. Man's praise is no measure of a man's true standing.

'It is better to trust in God than to trust in man. It is better to trust in God than to trust in princes.' (Psalm 118:8)

'It is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.' (2 Corinthians 10:18)

'But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what

was in each person.' (John 2:24-25)

'Your Father, who is unseen... sees what is done in secret and will reward you.'

(Matthew 6:18)

'The greatest among you will be your servant... those who humble themselves will be exalted.' (Matthew 23:11-12)

'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourself.' (Philippians 2:3)

Another thing that has really helped me, is considering the 'truth' of how Jesus, equal with God, ***'made himself nothing'***. (Philippians 2:7) In order to be with us here on earth, in order to relate, to touch, to bless, he had to stoop low. He put his own identity aside (and often would not let people or demons declare his high identity), and made himself 'low' so he could lift others high.

'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.'

(2 Corinthians 8:9)

So a challenge to myself has been to 'go low', to actually make myself nothing. Fade. Serve. Rather than make myself known, work to know the *other* person. Jesus did this, so I can do this.

There is truth in this. I ask questions about the other person, and listen more – more than I would naturally. This holds true for me now in Christian circles (as a ‘truth’, a map), and it holds true for me in sharing Jesus with people, in my testimony.

For example, although I develop lots of resources – like books, etc. – when I’m with people one-on-one in work or on the street, I like to ‘minister’ in person, if you know what I mean. I don’t like to refer to this or that thing that I’ve developed, but rather listen to their heart and story today, and stand and pray with them today. Write a new chapter, here and now with this person, if you know what I mean.

Paul liked to keep things in the moment. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul is telling of things he experienced and accomplished in the past (because he was trying to establish his apostolic authority), however, he then says:

‘I refuse to go on talking, so that no one thinks more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.’ (2 Corinthians 12:6)

In other words, Paul is saying that whatever about the past, whatever about status and accolades, if he is not ‘in the moment’, here and now it all counts for nothing. If I can’t be Christ-like here and now with this person in this moment - which is often being low and not high - then what has my past Christian life actually

built? Has it brought me to a point of pride and insecurity, or has it brought me to deep peace in being with Christ in a lowly and servant space?

'In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his advantage; rather he made himself nothing by taking the nature of servant...'
(Philippians 2:5-7)

I've entitled this section '*capacity*'. What I've been thinking about a lot is not only what heaven will be like, but our capacity for heavenly experience when we're there.

For example, I won't have a shred of insecurity in my identity or my place in the company of the saints. Zero insecurity, full capacity to enjoy, to belong. Heaven will be complete healing, complete wholeness of the soul and mind, so that life in its perfection, can be perfectly experienced.

God grows me now, and heals me now. But I know full healing and '*capacity*' to live eternally, will come when I pass through to the other side.

'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.' (1 Corinthians 13:12)

'Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.'

(2 Corinthians 4:16)

It's gonna be OK

If Jesus was somewhere nearby today, at a park or in a home somewhere, I could put down my activities and go find him. I could put down my stresses, my worries, my debts, everything, and go find him. When I found him, I could connect. I could make sure I see him, and that he sees me. I could note that moment that his eyes meet mine, and I know that he knows my life. I know that he sees my struggles. To just see him for that one moment, to know that he sees me and knows my burdens, I could go home in peace. I could trust that God was with me, that his power could change things in my life, and that everything was gonna be OK.

Jesus was called, '**Emanuel**', which means, '**God with us.**' (Matthew 1:23) God with you. God with me. Jesus is God with you.

Jesus told his disciples that they should be glad that he was going to leave the earth, because when he left he would then be present by his Holy Spirit. You see, his Holy Spirit is Jesus everywhere, at all times.

So we no longer need to find Jesus in a park or someone's home. He is with anyone who truly calls on his name. He is there. And everything's gonna be OK.

Jesus said, '***I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Holy***

Spirit will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)

Now, Jesus did not tell us that everything wrong or difficult in our life would be corrected here on earth. He does work in power to heal and provide and 'correct' much in our lives, but he did say,

'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world!'
(John 16:33)

I rely on God's help. I rely on Christ's mercy, provision and forgiveness. I call out to him all the time, and he helps me in big and small details all day, every day. Seriously! I rely on him and his mercy. But sometimes, rather than fixing something, or having prevented something, Jesus comes and meets me in the struggle. It's like, I find myself confused or under pressure, and then I find that Jesus is with me there, sitting at my side, standing at my side.

Note: Jesus does not allow sin to happen to you. If you felt that Christ did not 'protect' you from something, this is never the same as Christ 'allowing it'. No! He hates sin and will judge the sinner. So I don't understand how Christ can be with me in the pain, but was not there in the assault. But I do see in Scripture a deep, heart's cry of Jesus to leave this with him. He weeps with us in our pain. He did this with Mary and Martha in John 11:35, and he did it over the

whole city in Luke 19:41-42. If you can, like a child, receive the comfort of Jesus and not blame him for the evil of mankind towards you, you will be mighty in the kingdom, this I know to be true in Scripture.¹

‘Unless you change and become like a child, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.’
(Matthew 18:3)

‘If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him.’ (2 Timothy 2:11-12)

One day Jesus and his disciples were visiting Mary and Martha’s home. This was a special occasion! Martha got busy to prepare the meal for everyone. And quite frankly, somebody had to! But Mary ‘sat at the feet of Jesus listening to him teach.’

Now, Martha got upset, stressed, and asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her out. But Jesus used this opportunity to point out something really deep. He told Martha that she was busy and upset about many things, but only one thing mattered. And that Mary had ‘chosen what was better, and it would not be taken away from her.’

After making this point about the difference between being busy about life and its demands,

¹ For more on this important truth, read, ‘*This Side of Evil*’, on my website under the ‘Books’ tab: www.1peter1three.weebly.com

and the need to take time to sit at the feet of Jesus and soak in his presence, Jesus probably told Mary to jump to it, and help out!

No, I don't know, but I do know that Jesus was not an impractical person, and somebody had to cook! But we do see that Jesus wants us to know the difference between doing good things for people, and even for him, and just spending time with him – out of time, so to speak.

As noted above, his very name, 'Emanuel', means, '**God with us**'. Jesus came to be with us, now – yes, here on stressful earth – and then forevermore in heaven above.

Like Mary, I need to sit quietly with Jesus. I need to take time to let him rise in my heart and mind above my earthly worries and struggles. He has '**overcome the world.**' He promised that the '**prince of this world has been defeated.**' (John 16:11) Glory is in sight. Every day nearer.¹

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

Even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

¹ Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 11:28-30; Proverbs 4:18

***If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
Even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.***

(Psalm 139:7-11)

Hebrews 11 – The ‘Faith’ Chapter

The first verse of Hebrews 11 says:

‘Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.’

The rest of the chapter – an amazing chapter – describes different people of faith throughout the Bible, and how by ‘faith’ they did what they did.

I used to read this chapter more along the lines of faith being defined – a type of ‘assurance’ in the soul, a ‘certainty’ in mind. This was faith. But as I read the chapter recently, it is not only about defining faith, and I would say not even primarily about defining faith; but rather about what a person’s life looks like when they have faith. A life of faith is a life of action in God. It is a life of building, and living for, another kingdom. It is about going against the flow of this world, its principles, its values, its legacy, and living for another world, kingdom, King and legacy.

‘By faith Noah, when warned... built an ark...’
(vs.7)

‘By faith Abraham, when called... obeyed and went...’ (vs.8)

Noah had faith in a God that could not be seen with human eyes, but Noah lived by what he knew of this God to be true, and he acted on it. Abraham had faith in a God that could not be

seen with human eyes, but Abraham lived by what he knew to be true, and acted on it.

Their faith had a vision of the eternal, eyes lifted above the sphere of the temporal. Look what it says of Abraham:

'He was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.' (vs.10)

This is like Jesus who, we are told, had his eyes fixed on the other world, in order to get him through this world:

'For the joy set before him [Jesus] he endured the cross...' (Hebrews 12:2)

We, too, are admonished by Paul, to do the same: ***'So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.'*** (2 Corinthians 4:18)

Paul also writes: ***'We live by faith and not by sight.'*** (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Towards the end of Hebrews 11 we are told of people who endured intense hardship because they were people of faith – i.e. people who were invested in another world, a different citizenship. We are told, ***'They were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he***

has prepared a city for them.' (vs.16)

Do I live like this? Am I a person of faith? Do I move in the Spirit and the water flow of God's kingdom? Do I live for another land, another city, another inheritance? Do I build? What kingdom am I truly invested in?

'Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated - the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith...'

(Hebrews 11:35-39)

Where we are 'assured' of something, 'certain' of something, we act on it. Winds might blow, resources might come and go, but we walk on, because we know. True faith is not about intense 'feeling' or vision all the time. On the contrary. It is about continuing our walk even when feelings weaken, vision fades, but deep in our soul there remains an assurance of its truth, a certainty of Jesus.

What can wash away my sin?

Robert Lowry wrote this song. (1826-1899)

This one line, this question, was going over and over in my head recently: *'What can wash away my sin?'*

Every man, woman and child need to ask this, need to hear this. I feel the question itself meets every soul in the deepest place, and compels it to seek an answer.

One Little Light

I work as a social worker for 'Child Protective Services', and I live in quite a rural State of America. Often I'm driving in the night along dark and lonely roads to visit families in their homes.

The other night I drove a long stretch in the dark, along winding roads with woods all around. I could see dark houses here and there in the trees and fields, and the world felt so lonely. I could see how beautiful this or that house would probably look in the sun, but when the sun goes down, well, it's like the very heart of life slips away.

But then I caught a glimpse of a home through the trees that had warm light glowing out the window. The whole landscape, between my eye and that glow, changed instantly.

As simple as that. One light on the inside of that small home turned the whole surrounding, dark woods into an accessible place. There was now heart in the middle of the dark space, there was heat, and the darkness – as far as this small glow could be perceived – had no sting. It's as if the glint of one lamp dispelled the spirit of gloom as far as that small ray of light travelled.

When Jesus came to the earth we are told:

'In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.' (John 1:4)

Truly, where Jesus is, the spirit of darkness is dispelled. The prophet wrote about Jesus:

‘There will be no more gloom for those who are in distress... On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned.’
(Isaiah 9:1-2)

Jesus himself claimed this power, and said these amazing words:

‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’ (John 8:12)

It dawned on me driving down that lonely and dark road, that I could, if I wanted – or had to – stop anywhere on the side of that road, or any road, sit on the ground or just stand quietly and kick a stone. I could stop and stand anywhere, anytime, and I would never be in darkness. Jesus is with me always. I have the light of life inside me by the Holy Spirit. His presence is all around me, now and forevermore.

Now, the truth is that Jesus passes this torch to us to carry. He wants us to switch on lights in dark corners and spaces of this world, by his Holy Spirit and through his gospel, so that darkness all around is undermined, and his warm glow reaches far, reaches the lonely, reaches souls.

Jesus said, *'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'*

(Matthew 5:14-16)

Jesus had to be...

Jesus had to be both man, and then poured-out Spirit, because we need him to stand with us one-on-one, and we need him to blow through us, to be in us. Jesus had to be fully God and the Son of God, because we need him to *'be all and in all'*, and we need him to embody – like our body – the *'fulness of the deity in bodily form'*. Jesus had to pray to the Father and be one with the Father, because I need him to pray for me, and with me, and I need him to come to me in prayer, and answer my prayer. Jesus had to step off the throne and be on the throne, because to weep with me he needs to come to me, and for my tears to fall on God they need to fall on the throne. His name, the name of Jesus, had to be in print so I could say it, write it, read it, and it had to be Spirit so I can sing it, see it, breathe him and worship.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God... The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.' (John 1:1,14)

'In Christ all the fulness of the Deity lives in bodily form.' (Colossians 2:9)

'Jesus said, 'My words are Spirit and they are life.' (John 6:63)

'Jesus said, 'It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Holy Spirit

will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you.” (John 16:8)

‘God’s mystery is this, Christ in you, the hope of glory.’ (Colossians 1:27)

‘Jesus said, ‘The Father is in me, and I in the Father.’ (John 10:38)

‘Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of the God interceding for us.’ (Romans 8:34)

‘Jesus made himself nothing and was made in human likeness.’ (Philippians 2:7)

‘Jesus placed his hand on me and said, ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.’
(Revelation 1:17)

‘Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne... Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’
(Revelation 5:6,13)

‘Christ is all and is in all.’ (Colossians 3:11)

‘Then the disciples who were in the boat worshipped him...’ (Matthew 14:33)

No end.

At the very end of John's gospel, he writes:

'Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room enough for the books that would be written.' (John 21:25)

John isn't being literal here. But he is using hyperbole to make a point, i.e. that Jesus did much more than has been recounted.

I pen some writings, some thoughts, like I'm doing now. I write when I get a thought or insight about the Lord, or from the Lord. I feel this inspiration comes from Jesus. What I have experienced often is that when I finish a book, and hit 'publish', well, more insights and whispers come to me from the Holy Spirit, from the Word. I sometimes stand there thinking, *'Maybe I should have waited and included this reflection, before completing the book?'*

But the truth is, there is no end to the inspiration of Jesus, to his whisper to our souls. No end. In the same way Jesus did much more here on earth than was recounted, so too you and I will experience so much more of Jesus than we will ever recount. He speaks to us all day long.¹ He opens and closes doors, protects and provides.

¹ John 10:27; Amos 4:13; Psalm 63:6

As we walk with Jesus in this life, not only do we become more tuned into his Spirit and his voice, but we see things in the past that we did not see at that time. We look back and see Jesus with us in places, and in ways, that we did not perceive in the moment. When we feel winds of peace come over us, or feel a block in the road removed, well, Jesus is working. All day, every day, in your personal walk. On that lonely road, Jesus walks with you. There is no end to his presence and his works in your life.

‘Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls. All your waves and breakers have swept over me.’ (Psalm 42:7)

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