

Made for His Pleasure – July 29, 2018

One of my all-time favorite, true-life stories comes from Barry McGuire. Former sixties folk singer with the New Christy Minstrels and someone at the center of the Sixties music revolution and ultimately gave his life over to Jesus Christ and became one of the driving voices of the Jesus Music of the 70s. [Many of you will remember when we hosted Barry and John York doing their show “Trippin’ The Sixties” as a fundraising concert for the JeffCo Winter Homeless Shelter.] Barry remembers one amazing day as a boy working on fishing boats out of San Pedro, California. They’d finished fishing and were on their way back in when he noticed a dolphin break water. He got all excited and saw it break again and it was closer and it came right up to the prow and rode the bow wave as they made their way back in.

He was so excited he climbed way out and was hanging out off the bowsprit of the boat trying to touch it or hug it or something. But he couldn’t reach it. So he went back to the galley, got a dishtowel, tied a knot in the end and when the dolphin broke water he – bomp- hit it with the dishtowel.

This dolphin hadn’t ever been whacked with a dishtowel before. He says it came up out of the water looking back at him- like: “What is that?” Went back under came up again and young Barry –bomp- hit him with the towel again. And he swam off a different direction. [Bummer I scared him away!]

He went up to the focsel of the boat, talking with his buddy about how cool dolphins are when all of a sudden here comes @ 30 dolphins and he’s back down there with his towel- boom, boom, and they’re all shuffling over- hit me, hit me. He says he spent about 30 minutes smacking dolphins and laughing and screaming.

And then they all took off- except for one who stayed with the boat for a long time- the first one?? Gave him one final whack with the towel and he swam off with his friends. And Barry says he believes this was the first time he heard a voice deep inside of him that said: Barry, you see those dolphins, I made those dolphins for your pleasure. And he says he didn’t recognize it then but he knows it now as the voice of his Lord.

I made them for your pleasure. And I’m confident in saying that God was delighted by the pure joy young Barry felt playing with the dolphins God made.

We all know the joy of creation in one way or another cooking a marvelous meal, growing a glorious garden, sewing pajamas for the grandkids; or just the feel of looking out over the neatly mowed yard or the freshly painted bedroom. **We look at it and take pleasure in the work we have done.** That’s a good feeling. (Rebekah hemming towels: I just love these towels!) And then other people come along [like Barry on the boat seeing

the dolphins] and they experience our work and it gives them joy too [Young Barry laughing and playing with God's dolphins]. And that makes us feel even better!

Years ago we used to make all of our Christmas presents. And I am the worst woodworker in the world. But one year I made these **toilet paper roll holders**.

(Stand up wooden box with a base and a lid for 3-4 rolls of paper with country- heart cutouts in the face and stained it and trimmed it so as to cover all my bad joinery)

As I looked at the finished product I felt pretty good. Truly, it's not much but it's one of the best things I've ever made out of wood- short of a fire. **I gave one to my Mother in Law.** And she kindly put it in her bathroom. Then she made plans to completely remodel the bathroom and I figured this was the moment my handiwork would be banished to some dark corner of the garage. **But no!! She kept it** in full view and since then she's remodeled the whole bathroom again and my toilet paper holder is still there. Every time we visit her and I need toilet paper. I see my handiwork and have a very contented feeling.

In the book of **Revelation** there is a place where we get a peek into **the throne room** of God and there's God on the throne, and 24 elders around the throne and **thunder and lightening** flashes and a sea of glass and four **weird creatures** covered with eyes and shaped like different animals.

The creatures sing a song to God and when they do the Elders respond...

Rev. 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

God created all things: *horses and sea stars and June bugs and falcons, salamanders and peach trees, mushrooms and honey bees and little garter snakes sliding through the grass and the planet Venus brightly rolling across our summer sky.* **Matter-** as we experience it- **exists because a being beyond our comprehension determined that it should.** The grains of sand beneath our feet, the cold, rich water of Admiralty Inlet, the warmth on your face and the smiles of everyone here **all exist by the will of God.**

All things not only exist by God's will but according to John 3:16 **God so loved the world** he created that he sent his Son to save it- all of it. The word translated "world" is **Kosmos** in Greek and it means – all of creation, all created things. And God not only created ALL THINGS but He also loves the Kosmos so much He allowed his own Son, Jesus, to die on a cross to redeem it all. The great hymn of Christ in Col 1 tells us that it was by Jesus that ALL THINGS in Heaven and on earth were created. And further...

19 For it was *the Father's* good pleasure for all *the* fullness to dwell in Him, **20** and through Him to *reconcile* all things to Himself, having made *peace* through *the* blood of His cross; through Him, *I say, whether* things on earth or things in heaven.

God brought it all into being because it pleased Him to do so. And God died to redeem it all- every leaf, and hair and pebble and drop of it- because He loves all that He made! It all exists because God wanted it to be so. And so the Creatures round the throne sing: Rev. 4:11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Now while that particular modern translation, which is typical of many, is technically accurate, it's actually missing a little something.

The Greek word for “**will**” [thelema: **THE**-lay-ma] in this sentence is not about sheer intention or determination or demand. That idea is present, but the **Greek word for “will”** here carries more meaning. It's about “**what one wishes,**” **what one desires**, it is an *inclination toward that which pleases and creates joy*. Here's another modern translation that includes that idea: **Rev. 4:11** “You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because **you created what you pleased.**” [NLT thelma: **1John 2:17b** ...But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.]

I've never ever tried to make a pie. I'm not sure I could do it. My wife makes such good pies [Rhubarb] that there's no need for me to even make the attempt. But the truth is: **Blackberry pie gives me great joy.**

I don't get it very often and so it is an especially delicious treat. *If I could make a pie and I made myself a blackberry pie I would be bringing into being something that gives me great, great pleasure.* I would be inclined to create the thing because of the pleasure the thing give me.

And so the translators of the King James version of the scriptures got it spot on when they penned: Rev 4: 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, **and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**

Everything that is, is because it brings God pleasure. All things on this earth from Giraffes to Western Newts, from phytoplankton to Blue whales, from Alpine Phlox to Giant Sequoias; all crawling, creeping running, flying swimming, growing, flowing, branching, vining things exist because they **bring God pleasure.**

Two things to say about that:

The first very short: What's important to God should be a priority for God's people. If He created **all things** -things in Heaven and things on Earth- and if Jesus died to reconcile **ALL Things.** And if **all the things** He made exist because they bring God pleasure then, *we, His people should take its existence, well-being and protection seriously.* And, in fact the narratives about the Creation of the world clearly name Humans as God's designated representatives to keep and care for the earth. It is our God-given responsibility to function as governing stewards of ALL these things that God created because he took pleasure in them. And Jesus died to save all of it. God so loved the world that He will, indeed, hold you and I accountable for our care for creation or our lack of it.

Second and just as important: You and I are part of that “all things.”

You were brought into being because God desired you to be.

God feels about you the way I feel about blackberry pie- bigger than that, even.

Your very existence brings greater Joy to the God of the universe than all the stars of the Milky Way.

Ps 8: 3-5 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained; what is man that you take thought of him and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the angels and you crown him with glory and majesty! **You and I exist because it makes God glad that we do.**

Last week I mentioned the documentary film on Fred Rogers. Here's another bit of truth from Mr. Rogers. “If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person.” He's talking about how important we are to one another. But if you could know how important you are to God, it would blow your mind. **Psa. 139:17** How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! **18** If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.

Our kids are all grown up now, mostly all graduated and pursuing the ups and downs of their adult lives. But when they were younger it made ME feel really good when adults who met my kids LIKED THEM. [They obviously had good taste.] **Similarly, God's joy is magnified when we love the things he loves: the world around us and one another.**

God is pleased when we appreciate one another, enjoy one another, laugh with one another, **because we are caring for and enjoying the thing he delighted in making.**

Don't you love to watch your kids or grandkids having fun together? Of course you do. **God is the same.** He loves to see us eating together, conversing with together, playing together, and having real, live honest carefree fun with one another. God LOVES seeing what we're doing right now!

When we are authentically laughing and playing in the presence of God it gives the Lord of glory great pleasure. Remember Jesus was called a glutton and a drunkard because he frequently attended peoples' parties. They didn't call him those things because he'd sat in the corner scowling. Jesus loves and delights in and is fascinated by ALL THINGS He made- **and YOU are part of that All Things.**

So this is the message for you today:

1. All of this beautiful universe, all its wonderful creatures and intricate systems exist because it pleases God that they do. He made it all because it delighted him to do so.

2. When you love and celebrate and appreciate and protect what God has made (the world and one another) it makes God glad.

3. And the most important thing: **You exist because it makes God glad that you do.** You are important to God. You are God's favorite. You are made for His Pleasure! You are His Beloved.