



Faith---The Unseen Real

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see”

(Hebrews 11:1)

Dear Opal,

Some anonymous writer once penned, "To have faith---in the best and highest that we know---is to be borne along, through the difficulties of life---as on the wings of air." Thus, when one centers on the phrase, "wings of air" it prompts the mind to focus deeply on the abstractness of wind. Then when searching for the official definition of wind and finding it described as air in natural motion, as that moving horizontally at any velocity along the earth's surface, it gets even more mystical, doesn't it?

As a result of desiring a greater in-depth answer to the question, "Can you actually see the wind?", it has been stated that this is only possible to accomplish through indirect ways, from the movement of hair, trees, and clouds.

Thinking back to a cold winter night during childhood when the howling northern wind swept over each acre of the old home place, battering every inch of the ice-covered trunks of the giant oak trees that stood just outside our bedroom window, it seemed to attack their leafless branches with such savage fangs, that they loudly cracked and popped as their only way of pleading for mercy. Safely tucked in bed with my two sisters beneath layers of quilts, our tightly wrapped motionless bodies at first felt paralyzed as we breathlessly listened to the screaming and moaning of the angry wind that seemed to ceaselessly attack with an unimaginable savage force. In response to its brutish behavior, snow would slam against the helpless thin glass of the windows whose only covering was that of a thin shingled roof that struggled to hang on.

Yet, in spite of the wintery violence brought on by a ruthless wind, an enemy we could not see, we soon drifted off into dreamland without worry; all because we had faith that our parents would make sure we were sheltered and protected from all alarm.

Opal, on that cold night, three little girls had been living examples of what it means to have faith in what we could not see. Although we were unable to see the wind that caused the turmoil, through the acts of love from our parents, we were ***sure of what we hoped for and certain of what we did not see.***

Even though the wind wailed outside, sweeping the frightened snow beneath the doors and through the cracks under the windows sills, what remained in the face of the adverse elements on this cold and stormy night was the beauty of a child like trust that all would be well. As God's little children, we were faced without control because it was not ours to control; a situation that applies to every moment of our earthly journey. Although we are unable to grasp it all, our Father has the answers. Thus, when going through the trials and tribulations every person must face, realizing we cannot comprehend it all, this important concept truly is the purest definition of having a faith that smiles, one that will transform and move the soul. Although man is unable to see "fear", something that is invisible in daybreak and night fall, rather than it being loud and deafening, it will transition into a sound that is soft and lilting when we have faith in the Lord. And...so it was on a bitter cold night when the stormy winds of adversity knocked loudly at our door until the rising of the sun that announced a new day.

Another example of a faith that smiled in the face of sorrowful circumstances was when my father had to say farewell to a mother who held a cherished spot in his heart, a person that had been a guiding light on his journey of faith in the Lord.

Although everyone handles grief in his or her own way, I do recall that instance as a spectacular demonstration of his faith in the Great Promise Keeper in a way that still takes my breath away.

Having spoken honorably about the role his mother played throughout his formative years, when she departed for heaven, some of his own family members were puzzled and actually startled by the way he said his last adieu. Walking past her casket a final time, he smiled down at her saying, "See you later, mom." He was sure of what he believed, that being they would once again meet in heaven all in God's good and perfect time. Jesus was truly the solid rock on which he stood. He knew he was a child of the Resurrected Savior and would also follow suit.

Given the importance and impact faith has on anyone that believes in God, one must grapple with the puzzle as to why so many struggle with taking it to application level. Why is it so difficult to believe in the unseen real?

Opal, having thought about this in depth, although complicated, everything finally fell in place, that being man's battle with "SELF". For all intents and

purposes, man has a voracious appetite to label, define, and figure out answers for everything on his own. In other words, he wants to control, rule, and dominate the entirety. Self! Self! Self!

Yet, what is undeniably true is mere man knows nothing and is totally dependent on his Creator for every breath. In failing to realize this fact, he goes down the pathways of life unhappily trying to solve the riddle or mystery of the unknown, having not a smidgen of hope in ever stumbling upon the solution.

No matter, he takes a stand by being an expert, dressing the part accompanied by reciting verbiage that sounds important but truly is nothing but a phantom of his own pretentious ruse and imagination.

Then, as the hands of time tick on, and his body ages, requiring care, his voice fades exposing the façade, thus, leaving only an empty shell that will be forgotten and brushed away like dust.

Whereas, if only he would realize and admit that God is God, his Creator; his Source of life that was, is and will ever be, the Great I Am that cannot be understood, labeled, captured, or contained, he would literally perceive it as a composite of all the things that go against man's ability to achieve. Instead, he continues along this path, daily struggling due to being unable to corral, control, command, coerce, categorize, corrupt, or copyright God, and stubbornly denies truth; a journey that produces catastrophic confusion for himself.

Yet, all the while, the answer was right in front of his face; that being, faith in his Creator who formed him from nothing and has predestined plans to prosper and not to harm him.

However, for this action to occur, the death of "SELF" must first take place accompanied by a proclamation of belief in his Creator/Jesus, followed by repentance of sin. In so doing, the most surprising change will be that of intense relief, as the old skin that is decaying from trying to have all the answers and is worn out from the weight of it all, is shed and swept away.

Unfortunately, the behavior just described does not apply to only the secular world but to the religious one, as well. Actually, if man views a Christian's life according to the words delivered by the Lord titled, "The Sermon on The Mount", it would be clear that living in the kingdom entails walking in the light not just on

Sunday, but every day of the week. It would mean truly believing the words from "The Lord's Prayer", that read, "Give us this day our **daily** bread", meaning to have faith in God every moment of the earthly journey.

Above all, it signifies that God's thoughts are not our thoughts. Instead of trying to define everything as an expert, there will be spiritual mysteries that simply belong to God.

Unfortunately, this concept is not even realized and practiced by many members of the church. Having not put to death the powerful draw of the "SELF", they will determine rules and regulations for belonging to God's kingdom just like those during Bible times.

As an example of this challenge, think for a moment about the crazy wonderful mysterious gift of grace. Instead of humbly accepting that it will puzzle mankind all the days of his earthly journey, and accepting that it is God's and his alone to understand and impart, individuals in all their wisdom, have spent countless hours trying to decipher and classify it into categories.

Opal, if God had wanted us to break apart and organize grace in this manner, he would have already done so in advance. God's grace is and will forever be his gift to mankind that cannot be earned, purchased, or defined. It is his magnanimous love offering to us that we are free to accept or deny.

In short, whether the winds of life are soft and lulling or howling with deafening rage, it is critical to recall the words from *Mark 4:39*, "**He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.**" Yes, my friend, God is in charge!

Remembering always that Psalm 30: 4-5 assures us that even though our faith at times feels like it's almost nonexistent, God's favor lasts a lifetime, and that weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning; words that clearly demonstrate the difference between the unseen real and the real world.

My friend, let us join hands and walk the remaining pathways of our earthly journey together wearing a faith that smiles because of knowing God is in charge.

Please find included a poem about faith I wrote a few years ago that seemed a perfect ending to our time together this week.



FAITH--THE SPIRIT'S MUSIC

**Faith is the Spirit's music, lifted in praise to God above
A heart's song of hope, rich in grace, purity and love**

**Its feeling like the world is your oyster, confident in this journey called life
Enjoying the crescendo of blessings, free from momentary heartache and strife**

**Faith is one last musical chord, desperately desiring to vibrate the air
Struggling to climb life's tallest mountain, with burdens impossible to bear**

**It's stepping out on what appears to be nothing but air
And trusting that God's solid rock will always be there**

**Or being able to live in the empty, blackness of a long and lonely night
Counting on God's presence and the inner spirit's soft, illuminating light**

**It's hearing a still small voice of assurance, down each lonely path you trod
Saying, "Be quiet my child, it's time to cease striving, and know that I am God."**

**Before you ask, I answer, and while you're speaking, I hear
For you are the apple of my eye, dear one, and will always find me near**

**So lift your hands in a song of faith, on bended knees of prayer
Dare to trust! Dare to follow! He who promises will always care**

**Faith, the Spirit's music, heavens most beautiful and sacred refrain
God's reward for each step taken; eternal life for His children to gain**

*Love,
Colene*