

Nov 16th – Sermon notes

Text Passage: John 14:21,23 *“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them. [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.] 23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”*

The Lord has chosen for now to be unseen, **but unseen does not mean He wants to be unnoticed.**

Main Idea: A prayer “Lord, let me freshly embrace the wonder of who You are - today and this coming week,” If all this message inspires you to do is to extend your arms to heaven and pray those words, then it will have done its work.

In her selected book of poems, Mary Oliver asked, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” **What if our answer is: to walk in wonder with the One who made it?**

Working Definition of Fascination: **It is the soul’s response to The Lord’s presence and His works that exceeds explanation - an awakened attentiveness stirred by something so glorious, so alive, that it invites us to keep looking, even when words fall short.**

- In Luke 9:33, where Peter sees Jesus transfigured and blurts out, “Master, it is good for us to be here...” - offering to build shelters, trying to hold the moment still. Scripture adds, “He did not know what he was saying.” **That’s fascination: when glory overwhelms vocabulary.**
- When the Samaritan women encountered Jesus at the well, and he told her about her previous relationships. Like the Samaritan woman, **noticing God at work leads to trusting God more deeply.**

Holy fascination is not about entertainment. Nor is it just a creative way to conceptualize Christian living. It’s walking awake. It’s paying attention. It’s noticing. It’s internalizing.

Wonder leads to worship.

If trust is the meat of the matter, fascination is the seasoning. It’s what makes faith vivid, flavorful, alive.

- Trust says: “It is well with my soul. I’m going to be okay - even if everything else isn’t - because I know whom I have believed.”
- Fascination says: “I want to see what’s next.” “What’s in this box the Lord left on my porch this morning?” “Who will bring something memorable into my life today?” “What wonders from Him might I see today?”

Scripture says of Jesus: “They were amazed.” “They wondered.” “They marveled.” “They asked among themselves.” That same Jesus is among us and in us today. His very name is Wonderful.

Jesus is the embodiment of divine mystery, majesty and beauty.

- John 1:14 says, “We have seen His glory...”
- Isaiah 6:3 says, “Holy, holy, holy... the whole earth is full of His glory.
- To know Him is to say, “O Lord, You are endlessly beautiful - and I want to keep looking.”

So many writers, hymnists, poets, and authors have tried to capture how fascinating the Lord is. Here’s one of my own contributions:

Life in Christ is a symphony of many movements,
Accented by surprising notes of glory.
The universe is His orchestra.
He is the Composer and Conductor.
And the music never ends.

In Luke 24, we read about two disciples walking to Emmaus. They walked with the resurrected Christ, not knowing who He was. He shared the Scriptures with them in such a way that when He left, they said, “*Were not our hearts burning within us?*” They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. That’s what fascination with do to you. You gotta tell somebody.

Now imagine walking through an art gallery. At first, you’re distracted. Maybe checking your phone. Rushing past the paintings. But then one catches your eye. You slow down. You start to notice the texture, the light, the emotion in the brushstrokes. Suddenly, you’re not just looking - you’re seeing.

When we’re attuned to the fascination of the Lord, daily life becomes a gallery of divine brushstrokes.

- The sunrise is not just weather, it’s a brushstroke.
 - That fresh inspiration is not just an “aha” moment, it’s a brushstroke.
 - The graceful resolution of a conflict with a loved one? A brushstroke.
 - The kindness of a stranger is not luck – it’s a brushstroke.
 - Even our sorrow, when treated by God with His comfort - becomes a brushstroke.
 - Distress and anxiety cast upon Him because He cares for you – a brushstroke.
- And those jaw-dropping miracles? They aren’t coincidences; they are bold brushstrokes.

He wants us to marvel - not just at what He does, but at who He is. Psalm 86:10 says, “For You are great and do marvelous deeds; You alone are God.” David prayed, “One thing I have asked of the Lord... to behold the beauty of the Lord all the days of my life” (Psalm 27:4)

Lyrics to “How Great Thou Art” and Lyrics to “So Will I” (by Hillsong)

God will never so overwhelm us with wonders that we no longer need to trust Him. But living by faith doesn’t mean living without evidence. John 16:14 Jesus said of the Spirit, “He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.”

We don't control these manifestations. They come from God by His Spirit. He gives them with purpose - not randomly - but to augment our faith. According to 1 Corinthians 2:12 He's placed His Spirit within us so we may "understand what God has freely given us."

So how do we live this out? How do we keep our hearts tuned to wonder in the middle of ordinary days?

- Fascination is something that happens to us, but it's also something we can extract from life.

1. **By paying attention.** Believing God is at work in us. "What is God showing me here?" And that He is always at work in the world. I say, "Lord what are You up to today, and how can I be part of it?" We're His body.

2. **By praying attention.** By engaging the Lord in our thoughts, feeling and our actions. God will fascinate us through His word, nature, people, and even through play. Paying attention and praying attention we will see burning bushes in our daily life.

3. **By believing the gospel.**

- Grace allows us to review our game film with the Lord. Growing in fascination includes seeing and studying our own spiritual journey – our growth and our resistance to growth.

- Don't let shame shut you down from studying and learning about yourself.

Knowing why I said that hurtful thing can be just as important as apologizing for saying it.

There is a lifelong fascination, mystery, and adventure in Him as He teaches us how to live in Him. Because with His involvement, every event, every mood, every interaction regardless of its effect on me - becomes a steppingstone to greater discovery. Discovery about life, about others, about myself... And most importantly, about my relationship with Christ Himself.

I don't expect life to be exotic every day. But with Christ, even the familiar can be fresh. I'm gaining a deeper understanding of Paul's words: "For to me, to live is Christ." He's not an accessory to my life. He's the essence of it. **The essence of something is the indispensable quality that determines its character.**

And He's become that to me.

I tell people, no, I'm not religious. I am captivated and enthralled by the One who is The Life. The Life that walks with me, teaches me, corrects me, surprises me, and loves me. The Life that fascinates me—not because I understand Him fully, but because I never will.

If all this message inspires you to do is to extend your arms to heaven afresh and say, "Lord, let me embrace the wonder of who You are—today and this coming week," then it has accomplished its purpose.