

Hiding in Plain Sight (Why God Wears Clothes)

Psalm 104

The Psalms (no. 14 in the series)

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Video and audio versions available online:

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This document was prepared by Michael Hanna using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Michael know. Thank you!

Prayer

So Lord we thank you that your Spirit is here. Your Spirit is the Holy Ghost. So this house is haunted, Lord God. And I thank you for that. Haunted with the Holy Ghost, with your Spirit. And so Lord God through the power of your Spirit, would you help us, in this room, or wherever we may be at this moment, to preach. In Jesus' name, amen.

Message

Y'all may be familiar with Elitch's Amusement Park on I-25. But only some of you are familiar with the old Elitch's at 38th and Tenneson. It had a haunted house—a completely mechanized haunted house. You rode through in a cart on some rails. And it was spooky.

Strangely, however...they didn't really have any monsters. Just darkness, weird swirling things that made you feel a bit disoriented, and a waterfall that shut off just before you got wet. No monsters, but there were mannequins and that's what was creepy. Just regular people like construction workers and policemen. At one point a policeman popped out, blew his whistle and would freak people out... because they'd wonder, "Is it dead or alive?"

I loved the Haunted House, but as I got older the Haunted House got less and less interesting and more and more boring. I had gained "the knowledge of mechanical automation." I knew the waterfall would shut off because it was connected to a trip lever along the track. I knew the policeman wasn't a real policeman – not alive, but just a machine. I knew the house wasn't haunted, just mechanized.

I liked that knowledge, for it gave me a sense of control, but the fun died—and the ride got boring—until one particular evening in High School. My friend Pat turned to me and said, "Let's get out..."

Not having a mind of my own and always looking for ways to impress girls, I said, "Okay."

We found the trip lever for the waterfall and tried to get people wet. I don't know if we succeeded, but we did succeed in making the ride more spooky. That was the best part—just past the

mechanical policeman, we'd stand on the side of the track, perfectly still—like one of the mannequins. We would hide in plain sight...

When little children would see us, they didn't seem any more spooked than they already were. For little kids, all reality is enchanted and everything's alive. Everything is more than what they know and so we were just two more semi-real dummies in an already enchanted reality. But for adults, it was different. They'd glance at me... then look again ...and then stare.

I could read their minds: *"Oh look, they got a new dummy... and it's so real... Oh my God, is it ALIVE!"*

Then we'd move.... just touch 'em, and they'd go nuts... it was great!

Well after a few minutes I said, "Pat I think they know we're in here...."

That wasn't prophecy, it just occurred to me that by now there were probably some angry wet people, at the end of the ride yelling, "Someone is loose in the Haunted House!" Which is ironic—because, unless someone is loose in the Haunted House, it's not really a haunted house.

Well, it just occurred to me some folks might be a bit angry and we had no exit strategy. Just then, another cart came down the track. They could seat 3, but this one only carried 2—a mother and her little daughter. The daughter was already spooked, and the mother was bored until she looked at me...then looked again at me... and then I jumped in...right next to her.

I said, "Excuse me, but my cart broke down and do you mind if I ride out with you?" But I don't think she heard me, because she was screaming at the top of her lungs and wouldn't stop. I rode out with her, as the lights came on and Security grabbed my friend Pat. They didn't suspect me, even though the lady was screaming, because you know you're supposed to scream in a haunted house.

I felt bad... but at least the ride wasn't boring...

How do you prefer the ride?

Mechanized or haunted?

Dead or alive?

Predictable, under control, and safe or... fun?

Psalm 104

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul!

QuickqQuestion: How can your soul, your nephesh, your psyche, that spirit in an earthen vessel—how can your soul bless the Lord?

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD my God, you are very great!

You are clothed with splendor and majesty,

**2 covering yourself with light as with a garment,
stretching out the heavens like a tent [yariyah: curtain]**

**3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters;
he makes the clouds his chariot;**

- 4 he rides on the wings of the wind;
he makes his messengers winds,
his ministers a flaming fire.
- 5 He set the earth on its foundations,
so that it should never be moved.
- 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
- 7 At your rebuke they fled;
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.
- 8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down
to the place that you appointed for them.
- 9 You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.
- 10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills;
- 11 they give drink to every beast of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- 12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell;
they sing among the branches.
- 13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
- 14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock
and plants for man to cultivate,
that he may bring forth food from the earth
- 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine
and bread to strengthen man's heart.
- 16 The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
- 17 In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has her home in the fir trees.
- 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.
- 19 He made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
- 20 You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the beasts of the forest creep about.
- 21 The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
- 22 When the sun rises, they steal away
and lie down in their dens.
- 23 Man goes out to his work
and to his labor until the evening.
- 24 O LORD, how manifold are your works!

- In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.**
- 25 **Here is the sea, great and wide,
which teems with creatures innumerable,
living things both small and great.**
- 26 **There go the ships,
and Leviathan [“the twisting serpent,” “the dragon that is in the sea” Isaiah
27:1], which you formed to play in it.**
- 27 **These all look to you,
to give them their food in due season.**
- 28 **When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.**
- 29 **When you hide your face, they are dismayed [“terrified”];
when you take away their breath [*ruach*], they die
and return to their dust.ⁱ**
- 30 **When you send forth your Spirit [*ruach*], they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground [*adamah*].**
- 31 **May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works,**
- 32 **who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke!**
- 33 **I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.**
- 34 **May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the LORD.**
- 35 **Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more!
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD! [hallelujah]ⁱⁱ.**

Now that may leave you with all sorts of thoughts and some questions...
Maybe one of those questions is, “Is it true?”

Does God clothe himself with splendor and majesty? (like in v.2)
Does God wear light like a cloak, stretching out the heavens like a tent?
Does God make the clouds his chariot?

Does God cause the grass to grow... or is it nitrogen and photosynthesis?
V. 5: Does the earth not move? According to 19th century physics, it does move. According to 20th
and 21st century physics, it depends on your perspective.
V. 15: Did God make wine to “gladden the hearts of man?” (There’s a memory verse for you.)

Do sea monsters... and lions really look to God for food?ⁱⁱⁱ What about rabbits that become food for
lions? And are they all terrified when God hides his face? (v. 29) Is that why the mountains smoke?
...because God touches them? (v. 32)

I have an undergraduate degree in Geology from CU. My son is currently working on his PHD in
Geology and married to my Geologist daughter in law, Natalie. If you asked us why mountains

smoked, we'd tell you about plate tectonics or hot spots in the mantle... we'd tell you about mechanisms; we'd tell you about Science.

Science is actually very simple—it's just the study of cause and effect in controlled environments. In pop culture we kind of have this idea that ancient people had no clue about science, that they had no clue that one thing might cause another. They had no clue that if you stepped off a cliff the result would be predictable. They had no clue about "gravity"— "*Check it out you won't find that word in the Bible,*" we modern people say.

Modern people are tremendously arrogant... and stupid.

If you asked a geologist why mountains smoked, we might tell you about plate tectonics. And if you asked us why plates moved, we might tell you about convection in the depths of the earth. And if you asked us what caused the earth... we'd find ourselves back at the big bang and then we'd be forced to describe something like an uncaused cause, an unreasonable reason, or an uncreated creator.

If you took the sum total of all contingent reality—everything that has a cause—it raises an obvious question: "What could cause everything that's caused, except something like an uncaused cause, an uncreated creator, a reason for which there is no other reason—an unreasonable reason?"^{iv}

Now once you start thinking about unreasonable reasons, you'll realize that you're surrounded by them all the time... for instance:

- Reason—what's the Reason for reason?
- Or Logic—try to logically prove that Logic is logical?
- Or Truth—how do you know Truth is true?
- Or Beauty—what's that? How do you know Beauty is beautiful? How do you know Goodness is good?^v
- Or Love, Life or even Light? Scientists are utterly baffled by light.
- Or Consciousness—I think the Bible calls that Spirit.
- Or Existence—I think the Bible might call that I AM, that I AM.

Scripture claims that Jesus is the Truth, Life, Logos, Logic, Reason—that is, the Wisdom of God. God, who is "Is-ness," Love, and who alone is Good; who alone is Beauty.

So, does Beauty ride the clouds like a chariot? Do the lions look to Life to provide their food? Are they terrified when Light and Life hides his face, and takes back the *ruach* the Spirit, that animates their dust? Do you ever perceive a beauty, order, or logic in creation—even if it may have included billions of years of cause and effect, and even if you put labels on the mechanism, like "gravity" or "diffraction?"

A group was enjoying the beautiful music at a Chinese restaurant, when the soloist began to play a vaguely familiar tune. They beckoned the splendidly clad waiter and asked him to find out what the musician was playing. The waiter waddled across the floor, then returned with a look of triumph on his face and declared in a loud whisper: "he's playing violin."^{vi}

A stupid scientist (not a smart one, a stupid one) will look at a brilliant sunset and declare in a loud whisper: "That is the diffraction of electromagnetic waves on a cumulonimbus cloud."

A stupid theologian will look at Psalm 104 and declare in loud whisper: “That’s primitive man expressing wonder over things he doesn’t understand but—of course—we now do understand...we understand the mechanism.” “It’s just poetry.”

What I’m saying is that Psalm 104 could be true...but, you don’t have to believe that it’s true. It’s like God clothes himself with clouds, volcanoes and all creation. He hides in plain sight... and lets you decide whether the ride is mechanical or haunted... with him.

Why is that?

**You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
2 covering yourself with light as with a garment,
stretching out the heavens like a tent [yariyah: curtain]**

Why does God wear clothes?

[image: stars]

We just read that God clothes himself with this—“the heavens.”

Many have noticed that Psalm 104 mirrors the creation story in Genesis One—The Lord God clothes himself with creation.

- He’s underneath, around and within it all—
- He’s the beauty in every sunset.
- He’s the logic in every equation.
- He’s the truth in every statement that is in fact a statement.

“In Him we live move and have our being.” He is “being.”

And yet, he’s clothed, and hiding in plain sight.

You know the fashion industry is all about “hiding in plain sight.” Have you ever seen a fashion magazine? It’s all about covering beauty in beauty, that makes you long for greater beauty. I think it’s really quite confusing to men... but very effective. It makes them curious about that which is hiding in plain sight.

In kindergarten I looked under Lucy Nolen’s skirt and got in a lot of trouble. It wasn’t sexual—I don’t think—but I was curious as to what was going on under there.

Well, God stretches out the heavens like a skirt—a *yariyah*, normally translated “curtain” and sometimes “tent.” I counted. Before Psalm 104, *yariyah* appears 46 times in Scripture and every time it refers to the tabernacle that would become the temple.

Entering the tabernacle could get you in a lot of trouble; it could get you killed. It was a bit like looking under God’s skirt... What would you see if you did?

God clothes himself with creation; why does God wear clothes? Why does he ride clouds and speak through stars and whisper on the wind? Why doesn’t he just materialize in your room and say, “Admit that I’m the boss or fry forever in hell”? Why does he wear clothes? What’s he trying to hide? Is it bad... or good?

Several years ago, I was lying on a beach with Susan in the French Caribbean. I rolled over, looked down the beach and saw a beautiful young woman practicing ballet on the beach without a stitch of clothing... I think God said something like this to me, "Peter I made that, I made her. That's very good, but right now, the way you look at her can be very bad. Say, 'Good job God, and look at the ocean.'"

The truth is I was lying next to my stunning bride, but there's something in me that wants to take beauty and consume beauty, rather than worship God for beauty or as beauty. So maybe I can't handle that much unmitigated beauty. I'm working on loving one great beauty, I'm not ready for all.

Maybe God clothes himself for now, because we need protection from his Beauty, his Glory. When Jesus transfigured on the mountain and when he appeared in the Revelation, even his friends dropped like flies in the light of his glory. That's why the Israelites couldn't bear the tabernacle in their midst—people were actually killed by the revelation of glory.^{vii} It's like we preached last week the revelation of God's Grace which is himself destroys the human psyche and is too much for human flesh to bear.

It's his Mercy to protect you from His unmitigated Mercy... for a time. So maybe that's why God clothes himself—to protect us from himself. Or maybe it's to protect himself from us, which is to protect us from ourselves.

You see there's something in us that's jealous of his beauty, intimidated by his beauty... something that wants to take his beauty like fruit from a tree, rather than worship his beauty like the soldier at the foot of the cross.

I asked, "What would we see if we looked under God's skirt?" so to speak...

- What would we see if we looked behind the veil in the tabernacle?
- What would we see on the other side of the Big Bang?
- What would we see if we looked behind the veil in the temple of the human soul?"

Well we just preached through the Revelation, and now we know: We'd see a slaughtered lamb standing on the throne of God, bleeding for all creation. We'd see Jesus. "He is the radiance of the Glory of God, and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power..." or "as the word of his power."^{viii}

He is the Power, the Beauty, the Reason, the Logic, the Way, the truth, the Life, and the Love of God that is God. And we stripped him of his clothes and crucified him naked. That he let us, that he gave what we took, that he forgave his life, is the substance and radiance of the Glory of God.

He is Unquenchable Fire, and a Naked Man crucified on a tree in a garden.

I don't know how to put all of that together except to say that *the only people* that were allowed to see that he was both, *the only people* that experienced Easter, *the only people* filled with the fire, and the glory that is God, were also people that worshipped at the foot of the tree.

I mean, everyone could see that the tomb was empty. But those that saw him resurrected, and didn't immediately die, were those who knew that before we took his life, he had given his life saying: "This is my body broken for you. This is the covenant in my blood."

You see it was a marriage covenant:

That's an agreement between two people to offer themselves one to another as a living sacrifice.

- If I look under the skirt of my marriage partner, we call it making love and this is where life comes from.
- But if I look under the skirt of someone that hasn't freely offered themselves to me, it's not making love and making life; it's rape—it's taking Life and it results in death... *death*.

And that reminds of another question:

- Why does God clothe himself, and then...
- Why does he remove his breath? What about death?

- 27 **These all look to you,
to give them their food in due season.**
- 28 **When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things** [literally, just "good"].
- 29 **When you hide your face** [presence]^{ix}, **they are dismayed** ["terrified"];
when you take away their breath [*ruach*], **they die
and return to their dust.**^x
- 30 **When you send forth your Spirit** [*ruach*], **they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground** [*adamah*].

That's remarkable: I think the psalmist is saying that everything good, beautiful, right and true is the manifestation, or incarnation, of God's breath. And everything evil is the manifestation of its absence.

We are surrounded by Creation and chaos, Good and evil, Life and death...

And we experience Creation and chaos, Good and evil, Life and death...

- We are created with the breath of God...
- But God takes away the breath and we die...
- But then God sends his breath, his Spirit, and we are renewed,
- born again, and resurrected—*Adamah* becomes *Adam*: even the *Eschatos Adam*, the body of Christ.

All four Gospels record that on the tree in the garden Jesus surrendered the breath—God didn't *take* it, Jesus *gave* it. As far as I know that's the first instance of an Adam surrendering his breath... up until then every Adam held the breath in fear; but Jesus is faith. Jesus surrendered the breath, and God breathed it back, and Jesus rose from the dead... and it's his faith that saves us and creates us.

So why does God clothe himself? Maybe because He is so Good.

And why does he remove his breath? Maybe to show us that the Good is the Life... and the Life is fore-given to each of us.

- When we take it uninvited, we rape the Good, murder the Life, and everything dies.

- When we receive the Life as a gift, we receive our groom, give birth to his life and discover that everything lives with the goodness that is God.

To put it in theological terms:

- When we take knowledge of the good, (that is the law), in an attempt to justify ourselves, we kill the Good and everything dies.
- But when we receive the Good, as the gift that it is (Grace), everything lives.

What's behind the curtain? I think it's something like this...

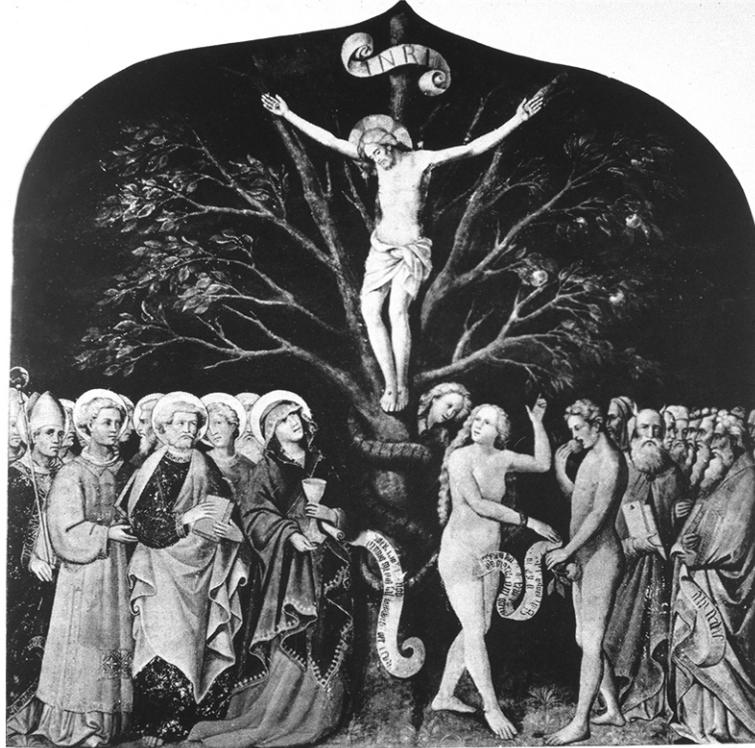


Figure 1 "Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena (1420)

This is a medieval painting of *the lamb* on the throne, *Jesus* on the cross, and *the Good and Life* on the tree in the middle of the garden.^{xi}

We modern people have missed it, because we no longer believe that God is telling the story, or that Scripture is haunted with his Spirit.

Here at the Sanctuary, we've preached this in Genesis, the Gospels, and the Revelation as well as Ecclesiastes—that there is this remarkable link between:

- The two trees in one spot in the middle of the garden in Genesis and
- The tree on which Jesus was crucified in the garden of Calvary and
- The tree of Life in the middle of the eternal garden city—New Jerusalem.

See, God doesn't change. Jesus doesn't change. And God's Judgment doesn't change. But how we relate to this tree does change, as the tree changes us.

- Jesus is the Good in flesh and his absence is evil. And
- Jesus is the Life.

If you're over the age of two or three, I bet you've taken knowledge of the good from this tree in order to justify yourself, and everything began to die.

If you've ever confessed your sin and believed God's mercy, you've been to this tree and seen that the Good you took, is the Life God gives... and you began to worship.

And now you may think:

OK Peter, I've heard you talk this way, but I don't get it. I come to church to get some knowledge so I can make my life work, I come to church to understand the mechanics of faith, so I can work the system, and save myself. I come to church and you tell me freaky stories about a tree.

I've never seen two trees in one spot in the garden of Eden. I've never seen God in flesh crucified on a tree in a garden. I've never seen the tree of life in the New Jerusalem coming down. I've never seen it...

Well, I'm saying, "Yes you have seen it; it's hiding in plain sight."

It's there at the beginning of your time and there at the end of your time. It's there in the midst of your time, and every time you encounter the Good, and consider Life. The Universe is haunted... with the Spirit of your Father.

When my two youngest were very little they had a favorite game that they would ask me to play almost every night—we called it "monster."

They would ask me to go hide in the basement and then they'd come looking for me. I'd put a lampshade on my head or squeeze behind a box. They'd come walking through the basement wondering, "Is it an old lamp, a monster, or is it Daddy?"

Sometimes I'd move or cough, just to give myself away...And I always loved to hear them calling, "Daddy? Daddy? ...Daddy?"

Then I'd jump out, grab 'em, throw them in the air, and blow bubbles on their tummies as they'd squeal with joy.

The basement was haunted—or maybe a better word is "enchanted"—it was haunted with me. And that's the way they liked it: not mechanized, but enchanted; not dead, but alive... that's the way they wanted it and the way they wanted me.

I don't think God is very interested in answering the question: "Does God exist?" Not interested—until you answer the question, "Do I want God to exist?"^{xii}

And so, he clothes himself in stars, clouds, rainbows and light. He puts a lampshade on his head and calls to you from behind the boxes. He romances you with high fashion: *"Wouldn't you like to know what's on the other side of the big bang, or in the depths of your own heart? You think the sunset is beautiful, wouldn't you like to meet beauty? You're grateful for truth, now would you like to meet the Truth. I'm glad you enjoy life, now would you like to meet me?"*

He lets you feel his breath and then he withholds his breath, that you would long for his breath... that you would long for him.

Very soon you'll see that it was him in the sunset, he was the Truth in every word, the Rhythm in every song... and the Love in your own soul. Very soon he'll jump from behind the boxes in your basement...

And when he does... if you have not learned to trust him, if you thought he was just a principle, a good idea, or a mechanism for making your life work... if you thought he was dead—you'll be utterly undone as you realize everything is alive with him.

- you might try to kill him,
- you might burst into flames...
- you might run and hide from him deeper and deeper in the darkness.

But if you have learned to trust him, if you've longed for him and worshipped him, if you've looked for him and called to him in your own basement... You will delight in him, as he delights in you, and you squeal with endless and unquenchable delight.

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul!

How could we bless the Lord? Well, maybe we could enjoy him. That's how my children blessed me—blessed me more than anyone else except maybe Susan—they enjoyed me enjoying them. I gave my life to my kids, I breathed my life into them and they breathed it back into me as praise—They'd laugh and giggle and say, "I love you Daddy" and "do it again, do it again."

Well the house is haunted, the universe is enchanted, and everywhere you look you will see the tree.

When you do...

- When you hear the Truth, will you think, "How can I twist this for my own advantage?" Or will you honor it and serve it—will you serve him?
- When you see the Life—will you just kill it and consume it? Or will you worship God and say, "Thank you for giving yourself to me."
- When you encounter Beauty in another, will you try to conquer it, take it, and use it? Or will you worship God at the temple that is your neighbor?
- When you hear the Word of God, do you prefer to hear principles and laws that you apply to your life, or do you hear the love that is your Lord who applies you to his life.

See? The day we crucified the Good on a tree was a revelation of what we fallen people do all the time. And the day the Life was given to us on a tree was the revelation of what our Lord is doing for us... all the time.

So...How do you prefer the ride? Mechanized or enchanted, dead or alive, crucified or risen from the dead?

The house is haunted, the universe is enchanted, and our Father is hiding in plain sight... How do you prefer the ride?

- I hope you seek him with all your heart, and in every direction, and all the time...

- I hope you learn to love him here and now, for soon he'll jump from behind the boxes; the Universe will spring to life, and he would like you to enjoy him enjoying you, forevermore. A communion of joy.

Communion

On the night that we betrayed the Life and the Good in human flesh, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light and the Beauty took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you." And in the same manner he took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it all you for the forgiveness of sins."

We'll celebrate communion now, but I'm reminding you to celebrate communion all the time and everywhere. In Jesus' name, believe the Gospel. Amen.

Benediction

So if you came to the table, I believe that the Lord just touched the coal to your lips, like he did for Isaiah. And he says, "whom shall I send?" Don't lie to him, but if you'd like to go, if you'd like to go tell people what's behind the curtain, that God is Good, and God is Love, and their sins have been forgiven, then answer God's question now in the silence of your soul. Say, "Send me. I would like to go for you." Amen.

That was an interesting progression of songs that Wills picked. I didn't pick them. Started with the song, "There is nothing like your love" did you notice that and God is love. It turned into your love is like radiant diamonds. I don't know if you thought, "hey that's a contradiction." But it's not. Because what's radiant about a diamond? Wouldn't it be the love in it when you give it somebody? Or maybe the logic that holds that cubic lattice structure together. (I love geology.) But God is the Good in everything. And then we sang the song about Isaiah. And remember Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up and the train of his robe fills the tabernacle, it fills the temple. And God touches the coal to his lips and then he sees that the whole earth is God's temple.

And now this is the crazy part. This is like (I kept trying to remember) 400 years before Christ. In other words, the universe is haunted. It's enchanted with the Spirit of your Father.

So we just celebrated communion, and I'm reminding you to celebrate it all the time and everywhere.

So, when you look at the stars in the heavens, don't explain away God with science; worship God with science. Say, "Wow, a quasar is 13 billion light years away, and you hold it in your hand.... That's impressive Dad."

When you drink a glass of wine, don't worship the wine, but worship the Life of God revealed in the wine... turn it into communion wine. (That way you can enjoy the wine and not become enslaved to wine.)

And when you experience his absence, when the manifestation of life, love, light, and truth is withdrawn... When he takes back his breath, thank God for his breath and that you will get to experience it once again, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye.

When my children would look for me in the basement, they were thrilled even by my apparent absence, knowing that in the twinkling of an eye, my absence would turn into my presence.

And when you expire for the last time, know that you are being inspired for the first time. God is breathing you into his eternal reality. *You are the breath of God.*

Allow your universe to be enchanted with God.... Because it is.^{xiii}

Amen.

Endnotes

ⁱ "For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath [*ruach*], and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity." -Ecclesiastes 3:19

ⁱⁱ This is the first instance of the Hebrew word "hallelujah" in the Psalms.

ⁱⁱⁱ Once upon a time there was a man who went hunting. He was hunting bears. As he trudged through the forest looking for bears, he came upon a large and steep hill. He climbed the hill and, just as he was pulling himself up over the last outcropping of rocks, a huge bear met him nose to nose. The bear roared fiercely. The man was so scared that he lost his balance and fell down the hill with the bear not far behind. On the trip down the hill the man lost his gun. When he finally stopped tumbling, he found that he had a broken leg. Escape was impossible and so the man, who had never been particularly religious (in fact he was hunting on Sunday morning), prayed: "God, if you will make this bear a Christian I will be happy with whatever lot you give me for the rest of my life." The bear was no more than three feet away from the man when it stopped dead in its tracks, looked up to the heavens quizzically, and then fell to its knees and prayed in a loud voice: "Lord bless this food of which I am about to partake. Amen."
-James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 420.

^{iv} This is the "Cosmological Argument" for the existence of God articulated by Thomas Aquinas, and first by Aristotle.

^v The English words "goodness" and "beauty" often translate the same Hebrew or Greek word in Scripture. "The Good" is "The Beautiful."

^{vi} A group was enjoying the music at a Chinese restaurant. Suddenly a soloist struck up a vaguely familiar tune; everyone recognized the melody, but no one could remember its name. So they beckoned to the splendidly clad waiter and asked him to find out what the musician was playing. The waiter waddled across the floor, then returned with a look of triumph on his face and declared in a loud whisper, "Violin!" The scholar's contribution to spirituality!
- Writings selected by William Dych, S.J., *Anthony DeMello* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), pp. 88-89

"In our world," said Eustace, "a star is a huge ball of flaming gas."

"Even in your world, my son, that is not what a star is but only what it is made of."

- C. S. Lewis, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1952), p. 180

^{vii} "The sinners in Zion are afraid;

trembling has seized the godless:

'Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?

Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?'"

- Isaiah 33:14 (Exodus 19:21-22; Leviticus 9:23-24, 10:1-2; Numbers 16:35)

^{viii} Hebrews 1:3 ("by" is supplied by the translator)

^{ix} *Paniym*: also translated “presence.” God hides his presence. He is always present, but sometimes hidden. “It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings to search them out (Proverbs 25:2).”

^x “For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath [*ruach*], and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity.” -Ecclesiastes 3:19

^{xi} Giovanni da Modena's *Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man* in the church of San Petronio in Bologna, Italy (1420).

^{xii} Kierkegaard believed that God deliberately withholds the kind of evidence that would force us to accept Him as a fact. Instead He entered into history incognito so that only those who already had met Him inwardly and subjectively would recognize Him. - Tony Campolo, *Partly Right* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1985), p. 100-101

It was Kierkegaard who went on to craft the beautiful story of the king who loved a poor maiden and so clothed himself in poverty and humility in order to enter her world and haunt her world with his presence in the hope that she would fall in love with him—him and not simply his wealth and power.

God haunts are world and asks us this question: “Would you like me to be your husband?” Only then does he fully reveal the fact that he is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Indeed, if you hadn't already been bound to him by covenant and learned to trust him as your husband, this revelation would be your destruction.

^{xiii} I see His blood upon the rose,
And in the stars the glory of His eyes.
His body gleams amid eternal snows;
His tears fall from the skies.

I see His face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His voice-and, carved by His power
Rocks are His written words.

All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.
-Joseph Mary Plunkett

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.
-Elizabeth Barrett Browning

St. Bonaventure (1221-1274)... said God is "within all things but not enclosed; outside all things, but not excluded; above all things, but not aloof; below all things, but not debased." Bonaventure was the first to speak of God as one "whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere."

- Adapted from *Hope Against Darkness*, pp. 135, 136... Richard Rohr