

CFAMC Devotional

for
September, 2012



I love mountains.

I don't know why, but I love mountains. Always have.

Some people love the ocean. I *like* the ocean; it intrigues and fascinates me. But I don't love the ocean like I love mountains.

Perhaps it is their beauty and majesty and grandeur. Perhaps it is the implicit challenge they offer to conquer their heights. Perhaps it is their sheer massiveness.

Certainly, it is all of these things, but it is also something more, something I can't put my finger on. Something magnificent. Something mysterious. Something ineffable.

Maybe it has something to do with the fact that God has often chosen to reveal Himself on mountain heights:

There is Abraham going to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his only son at God's command, and God blessing Abraham's faithfulness.

I think of Moses and the burning bush on Mount Sinai, and later his receiving of God's Law on that same mountain.

I am reminded of God establishing His Holy Temple on the

heights of what many scholars believe was the same Mount Moriah where Abraham went to offer up his son.

And it was a mountain, the Mount of Olives, from which Jesus took His leave of this earth, and to which He will one day (soon?) return.

Certain it is that God Himself considers mountains special and holy places. The Psalms include many references to His Holy mountain. And the prophet Isaiah says, in 52:7: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.”

I could go on and on, but you get the idea.

My wife and I recently celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary with a vacation out west. One of our primary destinations (certainly mine) was the Grand Teton Mountains—I have long considered them arguably the most beautiful mountains on the face of the planet. Seeing them in person absolutely ranks as one of the most thrilling experiences of my life (and I have about 400 pictures of them to prove it!).



Even as I reveled in the glory of all the different kinds of mountains out west, I couldn't help but reflect on how these mountains came to be: Most of them undoubtedly came about as a result of the worldwide flood in which God destroyed all living flesh—except for a remnant holed up in a large ship. During that flood and in the incredible geological upheavals that attended and followed it, most—if not all—of the world's mountains came to be.

I was struck by how the wreckage and aftermath of God's greatest judgment upon mankind to date resulted in all the amazing and spectacular scenery we now enjoy around the world (to my mind, mostly in the mountains). He turned a thing of judgment and destruction into a glorious testimony to His power, His justice, and His merciful love. Who else could do a thing like that?



And I was also struck with how He has done that in my own life. One of our brothers in this organization has confessed before us the temptations and struggles he suffered throughout his youth with his sexual identity. And yet that same brother has become a source of inspiration and

encouragement to many of us. Well, in like manner and worse, I know how and where my life was headed until He delivered me from certain death and destruction. I would not want to turn this into some kind of “I’m a worse sinner than you are” debate, but suffice it to say, that it is almost certain, with the way my life was headed, I would not be here today if He had not intervened. Promiscuous sex, drugs, false religion and spirituality, depression, suicidal tendencies—one or all of these would most certain have led to my demise long ago, were it not for the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, I know, it must have been for many of you as well.

But, like the mountains that were carved from the erosion of receding waters of destruction and the subsequent geologic turmoil that most certainly engulfed the planet, God has taken the devastation that was my life and turned it into something beautiful.

I say that in faith, because I don’t often *feel* it is true. I most often feel that I am still rough and rugged and full of dangerous precipices and



ugly eroded canyons. But then, I wonder, would a mountain, if it had self-awareness, see itself as a thing of wonder and beauty and majesty? Or just a huge pile of rock and dirty snow and rugged terrain?

It is usually only when standing at some distance from a mountain or on its very pinnacle that we can see and understand just how spectacular and glorious it really is. To draw out the analogy, it is only at my life's end that I will see it from the pinnacle. And I can *never* see it at a distance.

I can only hope and pray that God really is making a thing of beauty of my life and being, so that others who view me at a distance will see the beauty and glory He created out of the devastation—just as I know He has done and is doing with you, my fellow mountains in this rugged range we call Life.

Boy, do I love mountains!

