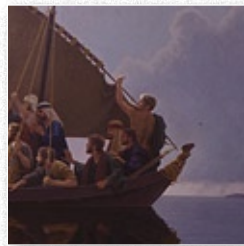


While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you." But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them. Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures...

Luke 24:36-45



"Were not
our hearts
burning...?"

THINE IS THE KINGDOM

The

HUMAN SPIRIT is tuned to the same
senses used by its physical container:

touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste.

Try as we might to will it into a higher level of super-sensory, our spirit clings tenaciously to its physical, earth-bound roots. Loftier philosophies may entice, but every component of the human form still responds best to those five elemental senses with which we were born.

God's Spirit, on the other hand, is held down by no such restrictions, for He is, in His entirety, spirit; He has no physical form to weigh Him down. He is free to soar wherever God's will designs. The Spirit may employ the same senses as humans: He certainly can hear our groanings, and can touch our hearts with soothing balm; He peers deeply into our intentions, and might even sniff out our base fears and imaginings. Though He may employ these earthy senses from time to time, surely the Spirit—being God—more often relies upon the one sense that does not come naturally to humans: faith.

"...why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

When winter is fading, and we see a bird with orange breast pecking about in the soil for worms, we know we have seen a robin, and that spring is just around the bend. When a master cabinetmaker runs his

callused hand over a board, he knows whether or not it is ready for the stain. When a mother hears the cry of a child, she knows it is hers. These senses are built into us; we need not strive to acquire them. Short of disability, they are there without our trying.

Our sense of faith, however, is not nearly so sure. Because it is not natural to us, and because it is the least used, this sense often languishes in disrepair, so that on those rare occasions when we do pull it out for use, we must first blow off the dust and cobwebs, and oil its rusty joints.

How splendid it would be if our faith were in the same limber shape as our sight or smell or touch. How convenient it would be to rely upon it with the same certainty as our corporeal senses, so that when we are called upon to know the ways of the Lord—to understand with certainty His words, His works, His methods—then our faith would be prepared, ready, and true.

And this is what the Lord means when He longs for us to grow up. Spiritual maturity in the human believer means a closer, more steady communion between our earthly spirit and His. It means that we have trained our other-worldly sense of faith to be as reliable as those with which we were born.

Then Job answered the Lord and said:
"I know that You can do everything,
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.
You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'
I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.
Therefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:1-6 NKJV

A New Relationship

Forty days after the resurrection the eleven remaining disciples joined the ranks of the rest of us. They no longer would have the person of Christ by their side.

They no longer would hear His voice, feel the touch of His comforting hand upon their shoulder, gaze into His expressive eyes. They no longer would laugh with Him over something clever said around the fire, no longer smell His sweat at the end of a hard, dusty journey. Jesus was gone, lifted up into the clouds, and no one among them knew when He would return.

Now things would be easier for them.

For roughly three years they had been torn between the earthy humanity of Jesus of Nazareth and the supernatural power of the Son of God. This one who grew weary by the end of the day, and who would flare with anger over something stupidly said, would also miraculously heal the congenitally lame, converse with demons, and walk atop the surface of the Sea of Galilee. Just as they would become accustomed to the Man, Jesus would display His deity; just as they would get used to walking with God, Jesus would ask for something to eat!

Now, before their eyes, the Man Jesus had ascended into the bosom of His heavenly Father, leaving as a final image in their memories the sight of one last miracle. Then He was gone. There would be no more fish dinners around a crackling fire, no more intimacies shared beneath the branches of a palm, no more sitting at His feet as He shared His wisdom.

Now it would be easier. For if man's feeble mind could hold only one image of Christ at a time, then surely it must be of His deity. In God's wisdom Jesus came in flesh, so that men and women could know that He understood and cared; in God's wisdom Jesus came as a man, for only as a man could He suffer and be killed, then miraculously be raised on the third day.

But only God could save their souls. Only the blood of spotless, sinless God could atone for their sins. And only if He left their side could they share in His supernatural power through the work of the Holy Spirit. They now had a clearer picture of their relationship to Christ: servants to the King.



*Fairest Lord Jesus! Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God and man the Son!
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown!*

*Beautiful Saviour! Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be Thine! Amen.*

"...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Acts 1:8-11