

GLIMPSE

Gratitude

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There was an elderly gentleman in our neighborhood who possessed a Cadillac. He would polish it, check the brightness of the whitewall tires and pat it like a beloved puppy while circling it with affection. The amazing thing was that he would drive it and never, I mean never, in the rain. I suspected he spent the rest of his days watching the weather reports. One cloud and the car was back inside the garage, doors shut.

Early in my Catholic grade school career there was a delightful practice of bringing cupcakes to class, one for each student and of course the teacher. I noticed almost always that the girls in their sense of modesty, purity, stuck-upness would never, never, eat the cupcake in class! The little cake would be placed right in the middle of their desks waiting for a more proper and mannerly time for its being daintily eaten one crumb at a time, I assumed. That drove me crazy. What's wrong with a little frosting spread around?

In my more advanced years I reflect on the goodness of things, even those without frosting. The Caddy owner, what are the many ways of goodness he saw in his car? In the book of Genesis God created light and saw that it was good. It was good for several reasons. God created it. It was also good so that the goodness of God's other creations could be seen. It was good, because then Adam and Eve could see the goodness in each other and all the gifts of goodness that God had given them. God could also see all that God had created and God saw, by that light, that all was good and humans were very good.

God called the light "day" and the dark "night". I have thought that there could have been light all the time. Why did God deliberately create night? I am not talking here about the earth's rotation and there is just one sun. God could have created suns instead of a sun. Now I muse. Perhaps we are given dark and fatigue to stop seeing, rest in preparation to wake up and begin seeing again, and maybe for the first time, the goodnesses around us. Separation can make us more appreciative, grateful for what and all we have not seen in a while.

Now the heavy thoughts. Is that car good, because the man says so? Is the goodness there and he sees it, because others say it is good? Is the goodness the shininess he preserved on it? Was there a deeper good which the manufacturer put in to it? Did those second-grade girls have some eating disorder which restricted their doing what we boys were doing in our undainty ways? Did they see something bad for their complexions?

God said that all of creation was good and this is the light with which we see everything. Everything is good in itself having God's fingerprints all over. I have learned lately that those little girls already had a certain wisdom about things. They sensed that the gift of time and the gift of place formed the setting for the goodness of somethings to be received and enjoyed. We boys did not have the sense of propriety or care. Classroom, playground, we didn't care and they did. It all comes down to the proper reception and employment of things that brings out the real goodness, the real light that allows God's goodness to be seen. Maybe some of those girls felt like throwing the cupcakes at us as we smacked our lips in mockery of their girlitude. They allowed the space and time to surround their experiencing of the treat, the gift.

Of all the good things God has given us, most precious is our sense of gratitude, which is the proper use of what things are and a reverence for what they are not and for the other limitations they possess. God gave that man an expensive car to be driven. God gave cupcakes, with frosting, to be eaten and enjoyed. The man revered the car's not being good for the rain. The girls reverence the cupcakes for a later time and space. The deep wisdom is to receive God's view of things. It is all good depending on how the light allows us to see them. It is only a glimpse I just wish I could have seen those girls eating their cupcakes in the backseat of that shiny Cadillac.

p.s. I have enjoyed writing these Glimpses for the past two years and have appreciated the kind responses to them. My time-schedule has gotten the best of me. I will write others as time and glimpses allow. You can find back postings of the Glimpses here on the website. Thank you.