



Simple Gifts

Words to Inspire the Spirit

IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL

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Finding Joy in Monotony

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What do you see when you look out at a field of flowers? Do you notice each flower differently or do they all look the same?

I remember the summer after I graduated from high school when I was like an au pair for a family traveling in Europe. At one point, we took a riverboat tour of castles in Austria. It should have been an amazing experience, for I'd never even seen a castle before. After a while though, I remember each castle started looking the same, and I grew tired.

As adults, we often become immune to beauty. We go about our lives with our schedules and routines, and we eventually grow tired. We stop seeing the beauty of the world around us. Our lives can feel mundane or unexciting, so we wait for the next distraction or drama to break us out of the monotony.

When my daughter Eleanor asks me to tell the same story or to read the same book again and again, I find I can sometimes become irritated, for I get tired of doing something I've already done. But then I'm reminded that the very one who created us all does not grow bored. God is creative and artistic; God created this world, each part being thought out, and each part called "good."

G.K. Chesterton, a prolific British writer, philosopher, and lay theologian puts it this way:

"Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to

exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we."

It is fascinating to think of God as younger than we are. At the very least, God acts younger than we are. God does not grow bored, not with us, not with the Creation he has made. It is we who grow bored with the routine and repetitive.

I even wonder if Jesus' disciples grew tired after witnessing just another healing or hearing Jesus tell the same parable. Perhaps, at least sometimes.

The good news is that because of his cross and Resurrection, Jesus has brought and is bringing his Kingdom here. Christ's Kingdom is breaking in all around us. There is no shortage of beauty on this planet, even when we do not always care for this earth in the ways we should. We will always have opportunities to see God at work, and when we see those opportunities, we are invited to participate, and to give thanks for what God has done for us.

The next time you see a field of flowers or get asked to read a story again and again, think like a child, and rejoice in God's work, even when it may seem monotonous.

Dear Readers: The publication schedule for *Simple Gifts* is being adjusted, temporarily, to the first Tuesday of each month starting with this issue. As always, we appreciate your loyalty, as well as your thoughtful comments.