

Does Our Heart Marvel?

Introduction

Pastors Prayer- talked/prayed about- importance- being filled w/wonder/amazement concerning God, Kingdom of God, the ways of God.

The Lord reminded me of a sermon I did ink past and I felt He was nudging me to revisit it again.

I am calling it: Does Our Heart Marvel?

Marvel- be filled with wonder, to be astonished over something that is surprising/extraordinary.

Most- familiar w/Marvel Comic book characters ...

Iron Man, Captain America, Spider-Man, etc People flock by the millions w/excitement and anticipation to see the latest Marvel movies.

Ticket sales- last Marvel movie- talked people out \$1,800,000,000.

There is something about these super heroes and their super powers that we marvel over.

But do we marvel w/same excitement/anticipation when it comes to- God/Kingdom/Word?

Psalm 19:1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

²Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.

God created the heavens and the sky to reveal His glory/works to the people He created.

Every time we go outside we should pause and take notice of the heavens, day and night.

Why, because they remind us of the reality of a Creator and the bigness/greatness of God.

The magnificence of the heavens is a perpetual testimony of a divine Creator.

Many of you may have gone to the theater to see the last Marvel movie.

Would you flock to the theater if someone was going to spend 2hrs reading the Word of God?

Neh 8:1 And all the people gathered as one man ... and ... asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel ...

³He read from it ... from early morning until midday ... and all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

They understood-eternal significance-God's Word
There was a lot they did not understand, but they knew that the Law had come from God.

Human beings have a strange malady that makes the ordinary glories of each day almost invisible, and certainly less interesting than their imitations in theaters and television. John Piper

We get a lot of stimulation that we enjoy through the various forms of media available today.

We recently celebrated Christ resurrection.

Are we amazed by the resurrection of Christ, do we marvel over it, are we stirred by it?

In all human history- there- never been any god resurrected from- dead other than Jesus Christ

It is the resurrection gives us- hope of eternal life.

Acts 2:24 “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Most of Marvel's fictional characters operate in a single reality known as the Marvel Universe.

Yet Jesus Christ operates in a multi-dimensional reality known as the Kingdom of God.

In Isa 11.2 it speaks of 7 dimensions of- HS.

Jn 4:24 “God is spirit ...

This means that God cannot be confined to dimensions of time and space.

1 Tim 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible ...

The marvel universe and its superheroes pale compared to- reality of the King/His Kingdom.

We might ask ourselves- Has the reality of the eternal taken hold of our hearts?

The unseen world should have a greater reality to us than the seen world.

Unfortunately what I can see, feel, hear, and touch often takes priority over the spiritual.

My Question: Does our Heart Marvel?

Is there wonder in our hearts concerning the majesty of God and His relationship w/man?

God, the Creator and sustainer of life itself, desires a relationship with His Creation.

He desires a relationship with us.

Listen to these two verses ...

>Ezek 34:11 For thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.

>Psa 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;

In the ...

>1st verse we see God searching for His people-

>2nd verse we see the Psalmist crying out for more of God.

Moments of wonder come when God, who is looking for us, encounters us looking for Him.

God is doing His part, but are we doing our part?

Jam 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

We really have no excuse for not having a close relationship with God.

God has called us into a partnership w/Him- Emmanuel, God with us and for us.

Hindrances to having a Marveling Heart

If I hold a quarter at arms length it does not affect my ability to see the heavens.

However if I hold- quarter close to my eye, such a small object blocks my view of the heavens.

It is the same with ...

>leaking faucets/crying babies

>entertainment, hobbies, sports

... these things fill our vision and block out the wonder of God and we are no longer amazed.

We become preoccupied with the world around us and it fills our time and drains our energy.

The eternal becomes less significant than the problems/distractions we face everyday.

Wonder and Amazement

What does wonder/amazement look like- our lives

Rom 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

Paul- filled w/wonder over- wisdom, knowledge, judgments, and ways of God- what about us? There is so much hidden in the Word of God that has been placed there for us discover.

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

We are the Kings/Queens of God's Creation.

We must avoid allowing the difficulties of life (small things- coin) to become bigger than God and cast a shadow that blocks our view of the wonder, goodness, faithfulness, glory of God.***

After Jesus death- some women went to the tomb- found it empty- ran back to tell- Apostles

Lk 24:10-12

10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.

11 But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

Who am I like?

... the disciples who would not believe the testimonies about the Lord (nonsense), or
... like Peter who immediately got up and ran to the tomb to investigate for himself?

Peter's actions may have been considered
impulsive and foolish by the others.

Are we going to let what others think hold us back
from expressing our passion for the Lord?

What do I refuse to believe about God?

Where am I denying the work of God- both in the
testimony of others and in my own life?

Do I marvel at God?

Is my heart filled with awe concerning ...

>God, who He is

>attributes of God- faithfulness, mercy, etc.

>acts of God- miracles, His work in my life

I know we serve a God that we do not always
understand- like Peter/Apostles/women ...

**If I am only willing to accept from God
what I understand then I am limiting God
and making Him subject to my
judgments.**

He would not be God if He was not bigger than
me, wiser than me, filled with great mystery.

To marvel is not to say I understand- it is okay to
marvel w/o understanding why or how?

Lk 24:13-16 (after Jesus resurrection)

**13 And behold, 2 of them were going that
very day to a village named Emmaus ...**

**14 And they were talking with each
other about all these things which had
taken place.**

**15 While they were talking and
discussing, Jesus Himself approached
and began traveling with them.**

**16 But their eyes were prevented from
recognizing Him.**

Have I failed to recognize Jesus in everyday life?

Have I failed to acknowledge God's hand in all of my life- good times and difficult times?

1 Chr 16:28–29 (NASB95)

28 ... Ascribe to the Lord glory/strength.

29 Ascribe to- Lord- glory due His name...

If something good happens- I can consider it a random event or ascribe glory to God.

Example ...

Friday my wife drove to Winter Haven to be with her mother. I prayed she would have a safe trip, car run well, no mishaps on the road. She arrived safely in Winter Haven. I could have chalked it up to her being a good driver, good road conditions, favorable odds, etc. Instead I offered thanksgiving to God and ascribed to him honor and glory for her getting to Winter Haven safely.

Make it a habit when something good happens to ascribe honor and glory to God.

Learn to interpret life in the context of the eternal.

Ascribe- make- decision between various options.

I can choose to believe ...

>that things happen by chance OR
that God is involved

>life is a series of random events/I am a victim OR God is faithful/present to help

Does my unbelief prevent me from seeing what

God has done and is doing in my life? OR-

Is my heart filled with expectation concerning

what God has done, is doing, is going to do?

Story of Lazarus- died- in tomb for 4 days ...

John 11:43–46 (NASB95)

43 Jesus ... cried out with a loud voice,
“Lazarus, come forth.”

44 The man who had died came forth,
bound hand and foot with wrappings,
and his face was wrapped around with a
cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him,
and let him go.”

45 Therefore many of the Jews who came
to Mary, and saw what He had done,
believed in Him.

46 But some of them went to the
Pharisees and told them the things
which Jesus had done.

In other words, some did not marvel and were not
impressed that He raised someone from-dead.

Am I among those who believe or disbelieve?

Am I critical of anything supernatural to the point
that I doubt/dismiss what I do not understand?

Do I portray myself as a victim rather than a victor
who is serving the Living God?

When you see ...

- >someone get excited about God or
- >someone fall under the power of- HS, or
- >hear- testimony of someone being healed,
... is that NOT enough for you to give
thanksgiving to God?

What more do we need to see God do before we
will be impressed, before we will marvel?

What would impress us, what would cause us to
marvel- jump up and down/shout/get excited?

What would cause us to run after God like people run to see the Marvel movies?

We Must Learn to Turn Aside

We must learn to turn aside from- busyness and distractions of life to engage- Lord and wonder.

Ex 3:3-4

³So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.”

⁴When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”

Moses marveled and as a result turned aside to look on that which he did not understand.

When Moses stepped aside from his everyday routine he encountered the Living God.

God was looking for Moses and Moses turned aside resulting in a divine encounter.

Has God placed burning bushes in our lives but we- are too busy/skeptical to turn aside?

What can we do so that our hearts marvel?

We become what we behold ... what we ...

>look at

>listen to (gossip, criticism, tv, movies)

>dwell on in our minds

However, as we behold, as look on the glory of Christ we are transformed degree by degree into His image.

Whatever I stare at grows- when I entertain thoughts contrary to God and His Word- I set myself up to be weak in faith.

I plant seeds in the garden of my heart that
compete for- nourishment my faith needs.

In Christ we are new creatures- old is dead (2Cor 5:17).

Paul talks about forgetting what lies behind and
reaching forward to what lies ahead (Phil 3:13).

Do not allow your thinking to be limited by your
unbelief, short-sightedness, or your history.

**Do not plug your faith into your feelings
or your truth into your experiences.** R Hauck

Let your faith be filled with the expectation of the
supernatural, the extraordinary, the impossible.

Psalm 77:11–12

**11 I shall remember the deeds of the Lord;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of
old.**

**12 I will meditate on all Your work And
muse on Your deeds.**

Take time to remember, meditate, and muse on
the goodness, greatness, faithfulness of God.

Interesting story ... evangelist Billy Bray ...

Isa 35:5–6

**5 Then the eyes of the blind will be
opened And the ears of the deaf will be
unstopped.**

**6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And
the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.**

After hearing the above prophecy, he said ...

**“I can't help praising God,” ... “As I go
along the street I lift up one foot, and it
seems to say 'Glory!' and I lift up the
other, and it seems to say, 'Amen;' and
so they keep on like that all the time I am
walking.” Billy Bray**

When he was told about a dying woman who died shouting praise to God, he said ...

“If a dying woman praised the Lord, I should think a living man might.”

We need to be intentional about ...

>declaring the goodness of God and

>verbally expressing a heart of thanksgiving

Gratitude is remembering what God has done in the past, so we can look to the future with hope.

A heart filled with excitement over what God has done in the past will look to the future w/hope.

Why Wonder, Why Marvel?

1. Wonder leads to worship

2. Wonder leads to increased faith

3. Wonder leads to obedience in actions

4. Wonder motivates our witness

Conclusion

Psalm 78:41–43

**⁴¹Again and again they tempted God,
And pained the Holy One of Israel.**

⁴²They did not remember His power, The day when He redeemed them from the adversary,

**⁴³When He performed His signs in Egypt
And His marvels in the field of Zoan,**

Israel disappointed God by not marveling over His power to redeem them from Egypt.

We can disappoint God by not remembering-marveling at His wonderful acts in our lives.

Like ...

- >the women who marveled at- empty tomb
- >Peter who immediately got up and ran to the tomb
- >Moses who turned aside to investigate the burning bush

... we can marvel- Jesus conquered death so we can live eternally with a future and a hope.

Jesus, speaking of the faith of- Roman Centurion-

Lk 7:9 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."

Jesus marveled at the faith of a Roman Centurion

Do we have faith that God can marvel over?

As we learn to marvel over God and His works, our faith will grow, and we will give to God something that He can marvel over.

Remember ...

Moments of wonder come when God, who is looking for us, encounters us looking for Him.

*****Michael Thompson**

Wonder does not ignore the hard times or even the times of our failures.

Wonder looks at the worse that life can throw at us and says that God is good.

Wonder keeps us in the place where we are always looking for hints of heaven in our life.