

THE REFLECTING POND

A Christian Writer Shares, Anonymously, a Moment When God Chose an Unusual Object to Teach a Particular Lesson.

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Often we do not hear the voice of God because we're busy with our much speaking. Prayer should be a time of receiving, yet most of us spend the time rattling on, telling God things He already knows—rather than listening to Him tell us things we need to learn.

Last fall a small group from our church were attending a weekend spiritual retreat at the Seventh Day Adventist Camp in central Florida near High Springs. The last day of the retreat, I arose early and tiptoed out of the cabin. The sun was just coming up, and the dawn was alive with the sounds of creation.

I walked across the deserted campgrounds—listening. God was speaking in strange ways. He spoke about the meaning of fellowship as I watched squirrels playing around the base of a live-oak tree. He spoke about perseverance as I watched a determined woodpecker hammer away on the limb of an ironwood tree. He spoke about power as I saw the sun streaming through the overhanging Spanish moss on the cypress trees, absorbing the dew on the grass.

I wasn't doing much except walking and looking and saying, "Thank You, Lord," when I spotted the reflecting pond. It was encased in concrete and spanned by a quaint, arched bridge. I walked out on the bridge and stood,

looking down at the water and listening.

"What do you see?" He asked.

"Lord, I see a lot of dark goop and mud on the concrete bottom of this pond. It looks like it needs to be cleaned out."

"What else do you see?"

"I see a bunch of dirt-caked rocks, dead leaves, and rotten vegetation."

"Is that all you see?"

"Yes, Lord."

"Keep looking."

So I stood leaning over the rail of the arched bridge, looking down into the pond. Suddenly I saw something else. Something infinitely more beautiful. In the dirt and molded leaves I saw the reflection of the heavens above. A miracle was taking place, for as hard as I tried to keep looking at the mud, all I could see was the beautiful blue sky, the overhanging trees rimming the pond and the white fluffy clouds. All these things came alive in the bottom of the reflecting pond. I gasped out, "Lord, I see! I see!"

"Let me show you something else while you're looking," He said.

Elated, I said, "Right on, Lord."

"Do you know why you are able to see the reflection of My magnificence and grandeur in the bottom of the pond?"

"No Lord, why?"

"Because all those leaves were willing to sink to the bottom and die. If that pond were cleaned out and only the concrete bottom left, you'd see nothing but what man has made. But because those leaves have settled to the bottom and died, you can now see My greatness. I can only be accurately reflected in those who have died to self."

I said, "Lord, that is even more magnificent than the first revelation."

I pulled a note pad out of my pocket and began to jot down what I had learned.

"What are you doing?" the Lord said.

"Lord, have You forgotten I'm a writer? I'm writing down what You're teaching me so I can turn it into a magazine story which will bless millions."

"Uh huh," the Lord said slowly, "and then millions will see your name on the story and give you credit for receiving this great revelation."

I have never grown accustomed to this kind of rebuke, which the Lord often hands to me. I bit my lip and nodded slowly. "I guess that's right, Lord. I'm sorry."

"Okay, keep looking. There's something else I want to show you."

"What's that, Lord?"

See that leaf that has fallen off the tree and is floating on the surface of the water?"

"Yes Lord, I see the leaf. It's a maple leaf."

"What does it reflect?"

"It doesn't reflect anything. It's just an old brown leaf. In fact, it's rippling the water by being there, and messing up the reflection around it. To see You, I have to look away from the leaf."

God continued to speak softly in the quiet dawn hour. "The only place you can see the reflection of Me is where the leaves have sunk. My glory becomes apparent only when every leaf has lost its identity and become a part of the mulch on the bottom of the pond."

"Yes, Lord." I conceded. "I understand what You're saying."

"Now son," He said gently, "while we're on this subject, I want to show you something else. Do you know how those leaves got on the bottom?"

"No, Lord. How did they get there?"

"They got on the bottom because a breeze came along and blew them all over to the edge of the pool. There, piled together, they began to molder and rot. They finally lost their flotation and sank. Then a big wave came along and washed them out into the middle of the reflecting pond."

"That doesn't sound very pleasant," I said. "Isn't there an easier way to reflect Your glory than having to be kicked around and piled together and finally washed out into the middle?"

"Yes, son, there's an easier way. Blessed is the leaf that falls on the surface and does not try to maintain its identity, but gets on with the real business for which I put it here—dying, in order to reflect My glory. But not many leaves do that. Most of them want to remain afloat just as long as they can, and all they do is mess up My image."

Then He said something else.

"Now son, you can write that down. You can even let it be printed in a magazine. But you can't sign your name to it."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." (John 12:24-25)

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