

## The Mysteries of Faith

### Colossians 4:2-6, Matthew 28:16-20

A father and son went fishing one day. After a couple of hours out in the boat, the boy suddenly became curious about the world around him. He asked his father, "How does this boat float?" The father thought for a moment and then replied, "I don't really know, son." The boy returned to his contemplation, then turned back to his dad, "How do fish breathe underwater?" Once again the father replied, "Don't really know, son." A little later the boy asked again; "Why is the sky blue?" Again, the father replied: "Don't really know, son." Well, at this point the boy was getting worried he was going to annoy his father, so he said, "Dad, do you mind me asking you all these questions?" To which his father replied: "Of course not, my son. How else are you going to learn anything?" Well, there are some things in life that are hard to explain. Ok, did any of you participate in the Yanni-Laurel debate? Listen to this clip and tell me what you hear? (Play clip and ask for survey) It's interesting. A lot of people hear: "Yanni" and many others hear "Laurel". Supposedly there is some scientific explanation, but for most of us it's a mystery.

You would have to say, even for the casual observer on this road that we call life, that life is full of mysteries. Why do certain birds follow a rigid schedule and destination as they migrate each year? How do all those seeds get inside a watermelon. How does a Boeing 747, weighing nearly a million pounds ever get off the ground? How does a spider weave such an intricately designed web? How can I take my cell phone and with the push of a button see my daughter and grandsons in Honduras almost instantly.

And if you transfer these questions about life into the arena of faith, we will have just as many if not more questions. On this Trinity Sunday, we express our faith and worship of a triune God. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God in three persons, blessed trinity. We affirm this truth as part of our faith, but even theologians have a hard time fully explaining it. And when we take these questions of faith to a more personal level we discover we still have the same questions. Why does a child develop cancer? Why do good people suffer? How does someone experience a miraculous healing, and someone else does not? I guess you would call them mysteries, mysteries of faith. And at least from a human point of view, we can not come up with any easy answers or explanations.

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I suppose the people in Jesus' day had similar questions as they wrestled with their everyday existence. You can feel the emotions of distress and anguish in the story about the daughter of Jairus...when Jesus goes to see the little girl, he is interrupted by the need of another woman who comes to experience a miraculous healing of God. When he finally gets to the girl, she has died...the people are weeping...And Jesus awakes her from the sleep of death and restores her life. What a miracle, but also what a mystery!

Sometimes we make the comment: "God works in mysterious ways". We cannot fully understand the ways of God. Often they do not fit into our pattern of thinking. They are usually beyond our ability to fully comprehend. I guess that's why the prophet Isaiah would say: "God's ways are higher than man's ways, God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts."

But when you think about it...that's why we call it faith. We live by faith, not sight, for we cannot explain the mysteries of life, the mysteries of faith. We hold on to this tenet: Only God can see the bigger picture.

Those of you who know something about planes or aerodynamics know that there really is no mystery as to how a million pound plane gets into the air. For with the right conditions they have to fly. Not that I understood this, but when an aircraft moves down a runway the air pressure around the wings changes. The air moving over the round surface on the topside of the wing is forced to travel in a curve. As it does, its air speed increases which cause the air pressure to drop. Meanwhile on the bottomside of the wing, the air moves in a straight line and because its moving slower than the air on top of the wing, the pressure is intensified. Now, here's where it get exciting! A high pressure area always moves toward a low pressure area. Which means the underneath air pushed up on the wings try to get to the area over the wings. Therefore, the faster the 747 rolls down the runway, the greater the pressure on the bottom of the wings. As the jetliner increases its speed, there's more and more pressure and in moments...One million pounds lifts off the ground. It's really amazing. So what seems quite a mystery from a human point of view, really does have a natural explanation. I wonder if the same is true when it comes to the mysteries of faith. In otherwords, from our vantage point, from a human point of view, we raise our questions, there are many things we do not understand, but the God who created the universe, the God who made you and me, knows and see the bigger picture.

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During the time of the apostle Paul there were those who were trying to make this matter of faith so mysterious, that only certain people could find salvation. That you had to have this secret knowledge to find God. These so called Gnostic tendencies are addressed by Paul in the book of Colossians. He wants his readers to know that God's mysteries have been revealed in Jesus Christ and no secret formula was needed. He writes that he was a servant of God "to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is in Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

I believe what he is telling us is that the answer to life's mysteries are found in a person and the things he taught us. That if we are to discover the life God has for us, we turn to the One who is source of life and salvation and who became the example of how we are called to live. Life has its mysteries, and there will be those things about life that we will never fully understand, but our faith in Jesus helps us to see more than meets the eye. When we look with the eyes of faith, we allow ourselves to be open to the Spirit. Like we sing in that hymn: Open my eyes, that I may see, glimpses of truth thou hast for me. Looking with the eyes of faith we begin to discover the things that we thought were real and true from the world's point of view, but in reality they are life illusions. They don't give us real life...we become so busy pursuing these earthly things which are devoid of eternal value or real meaning. So God is calling us to put our trust in the Lord even when we cannot fully grasp these mysteries of life, or fully understand how or where He is leading us. But there are spiritual realities that are unseen from a human point of view, and seeking to live by faith helps us to find what is real and true. And we realize that the things of life that really matter are of eternal value. Like learning how to love as Jesus loved. In the film, [A Beautiful Mind](#), John Nash, brilliant mathematician and one time professor of at Princeton and a man who wrestled with schizophrenia offered these words at his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize: "I've always believed in numbers and the equations and logics that lead to reason. But after a lifetime of such pursuits, I ask: 'What truly is logic?' 'Who decides reason?' My quest has taken me through the physical, the metaphysical, the delusional...and back. And I have made the most important discovery of

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my career, the most important discovery of my life: It is only in the mysterious equations of love that any logic or reasons can be found.”

Life is full of mysteries, and of course, we will continue to have questions about life, about the ways of God...we call that living by faith...and until that day when our faith becomes sight we will not fully understand the ways of God. Like it says in I Corinthians. “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part, then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

Perhaps this is a word for you this morning. You have been struggling with some unanswered questions, or you have been searching for some direction or leading in your life. I think it is an important word for us as a church as we face the future, wondering what that future will hold. That we are invited to seek the Lord’s leading in a time of new beginning. We are called to walk by faith and follow the call of Christ. To live as Christ has taught us, to seek to live by his example of love and service and sharing God’s good news. And to know that these are the things that will last for eternity.

We simply trust in God’s grace. We believe that God has wonderful things in store for us personally and as a church. And so we thank God for his care, for all the miracles around us, and for the ability to remain faithful even when there are those things we don’t understand and for the wonderful assurance that one day all the mysteries of faith will be seen in the light of God’s total plan for you and me and for all of God’s creation.