

Mystery

I've always been fascinated by the mystery of the faith and I'm not sure why. The Bible is full of mystery. One of the most familiar is the Call of Moses.

Exodus 3:1-15 (NRSV)

¹ Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

³ Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up."

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

⁵ Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

Moses was drawn to the mystery. Like a moth drawn to a light Moses was drawn to this flame which burned but did not consume.

As Moses came to the mystery, so do you and I come to the mystery. It is not a flame which draws us, however, it is a Cross. We are drawn to the Cross which stands as the central mystery of our faith.

Frederick Buechner in his wonderful little book Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC on page 64 says about mystery: "There are mysteries which you can solve by taking thought. For instance, a murder-mystery whose mysteriousness must be dispelled in order for the truth to be known."

He goes on to say that there are other kinds of mysteries. There are other mysteries which do not conceal a truth to think your way to, but whose truth is itself the mystery. The mystery of yourself, for example. The more you try to fathom it, the more fathomless it is revealed to be. No matter how much of yourself you are able to objectify and examine, the quintessential, living part of yourself will always elude you, i.e., the part that is conducting the examination.

Thus, you do not solve the mystery, you live the mystery. And you do that not by fully knowing yourself but by fully being yourself. To say that God is a mystery is to say that you can never nail him down. Even on Christ the nails proved ultimately ineffective.

"...you do not solve the mystery; you live the mystery." So, it is also with the mystery of God. God may in one sense ultimately be a mystery and yet when we, like Moses go to the bush which burns but is not consumed, we are living the mystery. Merely showing up in church on Sunday morning, personally or virtually, even though we are preoccupied with the details of our everyday lives shows that we are living the mystery. Our faith is always a living, changing relationship in which the search for God is as much a part of the experience as those times we encounter Him clearly.

Don't be afraid of the mystery but embrace it and make living it a part of your life for it is there that the meaning of our relationship with God is to be found.