



DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

EPHESIANS 3:14-19 (ESV)

SEPTEMBER 2015

Forever Famous

Recently a poll asked young people what they wanted to be when they grew up. The most popular answer: famous. Of course, that begs other questions, such as, with whom? Or for what?

One could aspire to be famous among the most evil people who have lived, but I can't imagine hell providing much honor. The honor that our soul craves cannot be found in the fame that this earth offers.

The Bible mentions a hall of fame for those who have lived by faith. These people lived extraordinary lives full of adventure and passion. They shocked cultures, defied odds, and brought heaven's order to earth.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible . . . These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Hebrews 11:1-3, 13 (ESV)

What kind of faith is this? It is the result of seeing something not obvious to the physical eyes. God-given revelation produces

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this kind of faith. We can't muster it up by all our religious efforts. God reveals; we see and act on what we see; he then makes it happen through us. For instance, we can't know by scientific observation how we got here. No one was there to observe.

It is true that we rely on hindsight **for wisdom**. We often hear that **hindsight is 20/20**. But if we haven't already experienced something we are facing, **hindsight is not enough**.

We trust the revelation God has given us in his interpretation of history, the Bible. Abel saw what God wanted in the worship offering and acted accordingly. Enoch saw God's reality so clearly he skipped death on his way to heaven. Noah was warned by God before he built an ark. Abraham heard God with the ears of his heart and saw a land that was promised to him. Even after he arrived in Canaan, he knew it wasn't the land he had seen with his inner eyes, and he refused to settle for it. Sarah was told by

God she would have a son in her old age. She believed and delivered the promised Isaac. And so it goes. All these and more make up the great cloud of witnesses mentioned in Hebrews 12. They are in the Hall of Fame that matters.

God has designed life to be lived like this. He delights in walking with us through indescribable adventure. He is not into "boring." Those who deny the possibility of seeing the invisible give up the chance to do the impossible. Living by the external man is limiting. Trying to make temporal pleasure satisfy eternal desires leads to all kinds of perversion and idolatry. Extreme attempts to find what simple trust in Jesus provides characterize those who think living by faith is folly. Danger, risks, wealth, power, and fame cannot touch the delight of living with Jesus as Lord and partner.

The foolish notion that we cannot accept as valid any knowledge beyond the test tube leaves mankind as his own only hope of salvation. It is true that we rely on hindsight for wisdom. We often hear that hindsight is 20/20. But if we haven't already experienced something we are facing, hindsight is not

enough. So we value foresight. Predicting the future based on the trajectory of the present is helpful. Some seem to have some special gift of predicting the future. We revere them, even though we don't understand how that works. Prophets and seers have always attracted loyal followings, but the best of them only see partially. God offers to his people insight; he grants the ability to see the true nature of things. Jesus is truth and makes himself known to those whose hearts are truly his.

The apostle Paul prays for believers regarding how we see and hear in the inner man.

*For this reason I bow my knees
before the Father, from whom every
family in heaven and on earth is
named, that according to the riches
of his glory he may grant you to be
strengthened with power through
his Spirit in your inner being, so
that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith—that you, being
rooted and grounded in love, may
have strength to comprehend with*

*all the saints what is the breadth
and length and height and depth,
and to know the love of Christ that
surpasses knowledge, that you may
be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Ephesians 3:14–19 (ESV)

Paul makes it clear that this insight is a grant from God. It cannot be earned or deserved. It is an act of the Spirit. This dynamic happens in the inner man where Jesus is made real. He is no longer just a historical figure who lived, died, and was raised. He is the living Lord who lives with us, and we are conscious of him. The key ingredient to this exchange is knowing the

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grandeur of his love. He knows everything about us and still loves us with the same love with which he loves the Son. We are not given just a portion of his love. He

does not love us on probation. He loves us so much that just glimpsing his love causes a transformation beyond human explanation. When we know we are loved by God, the pressure to make others love us is relieved. We can breathe again. We can come clean for the first time. We can come out from the bushes that have provided cover for our shame. We can come back into the garden and work with God as partners in his grand project.

We can believe that **God** has **regenerated us** and that he is actively **revealing the depth of his love to us**.

Can we do anything to build up the inner being? We can believe that God has regenerated us and that he is actively revealing the depth of his love to us. We can pay attention to the flashes of insight we get, refusing to dismiss them as wishful thinking. We can listen, record, and rehearse what God shows us. We can intentionally pay more attention to what God is saying

than to what other voices are saying. He gives more to those who use what they hear. Those who neglect what they hear, lose the benefit of it as well as the opportunity to hear more. We can give thanks for what he has done and continues to do. We can join Paul's prayer for others in our sphere of influence. As we pray for them, the inner being grows. May we, like Enoch, become so familiar with the realm of reality provided by God's grace that this earth cannot hold us down.



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