



EXCHANGING LIFE PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 71 | Sterling, KS 67579

Of Glimps and Glimpses

By Dan Camp

It was a gorgeous summer day in Atlanta, one of those very rare Georgia days with low humidity, refreshing breezes, and Gulf-water-blue skies. And our family had tickets to a Braves game! We had settled into our seats in time for the National Anthem, and our patriot hearts were stirred with the presentation of the Stars and Stripes. All eyes then fixed on the guest of honor who threw the first pitch, which was followed, of course, by spontaneous cheering and applause. What glorious emotions! You can take me out to the “*One, two, three strikes - You’re out!*” ballgame anytime!

Suddenly above the beautiful manicured field of perfectly mowed bent grasses, there appeared a giant blimp! One of our precious little ones, whose identity shall remain a secret, had not yet conquered the terrible phonic “B-L” and blurted out, “*Look, daddy, it’s the **GLIMP!***”

Now, to see a blimp from an adult perspective, spoiled somewhat by sophisticated scientific understanding, is to miss the sheer joy of a child’s innocent view. Such grandeur! Such mystery! Such wonder! Such awe! **Behold, the Glimp!** No matter how many times it appears, high and resting on nothing, it has a way all of its own of stretching our faith and filling us afresh with hope!

As we study the Life of Jesus, we are given by God’s Word and Spirit such glorious glimpses that can inspire and transform us. One of my favorites is Jesus’ trip with his family to the Temple where, as we see in Luke 2, He struck up such conversations with the mature and learned that their minds were seized with awe, as if they had a child’s first view of a blimp!

*“Where did this **child** get this knowledge?! Where did He come from?! Who has been His Teacher?! How does He know such deep things?! How is it possible for one so young to have such a grasp of eternal truths?! And whose turn is it, ah-hmm, to try to field HIS questions?!”*

It is our tendency to run quickly to our personal, often *warmed-over-God*, places of identifying Him. Because we believe we know Him well, we would respond with great confidence, “He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. He is Eternal Life. He is the Way and the Truth. He is from the beginning, and made all things by the Word of His power. He was in the Garden of Eden when our original parents fell into sin. He was with Noah in the ark and Abraham in the brush, and He made covenants with them. He knew the Law of Moses because He gave the same to Moses! He was David’s best friend! He was there to welcome the Hebrew brothers into the fiery furnace! He is Yeshua Messiah, our Risen Redeemer!”

We would be correct on all points, but we would miss our Father's main point. The glimpses of our Savior in Scripture, like this one of Jesus' wisdom at such an early age, are intended mostly to emphasize **how** he lived and **how** we are to live by faith in Him. Father wants us to know all the above, and so much more of Christ, Who is our Life, but He primarily wants us to see Jesus, **The Way**, and the method we call **Grace** by which Christ lived and breathed. The world around us is dying to know – *If the Christian life really works, HOW does it really work?*

When my dad retired the first time from the Gospel ministry, he returned with Mom to their home in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA. They prayed and the Lord directed them to lock arms with the believers at the historic First Presbyterian Church (PCA). When then Pastor Ben Haden contracted cancer, he needed a driver to frequently take him 300 miles (483 km) roundtrip for treatments, which were successful. Dad became Ben's chauffeur and friend.

Years before this I had met a man about an hour away, who had lost his wife and three children in a tragic auto accident. He told me about his deep and suicidal depression, and how he quit his job and shut everyone, including his own mother out of his life. He lived in darkness and squalor for many months, longing for death. One day his mother drove over and pushed her way into his filthy place. She pled with him to get up and eat, to try to live again. He could not. As she was leaving, she chanced to turn on his little television set. Through tear-filled eyes she selected a channel that at least had clear audio. She left, giving up all hope for her son.

Several hours later, he awoke to a soothing masculine voice coming through his TV. The man was telling a story of God's Grace. He masterfully interwove the strong love of Jesus that took Him all the way to a cruel death on the Cross. He spoke of a love that could transform anyone who would call on the Name of the Lord.

And from his hopeless place on that grimy carpet, he did call, and the Lord did hear and answer his sinner's prayer. He fell back to sleep in the first semblance of peace he had experienced in several years. The next morning he lifted his emaciated body, washed his face, and opened his thick dust-filled curtains. And the voice reappeared. He was fully attentive and took note that it was a pastor named Ben Haden on a show called "*Changed Lives*." And the man's life had been changed--forever.

When I met the man who lost his family, he had a new job in a Christian bookstore, a new wife, **and** new children! In my eyes, he was a modern-day kind of Job. I hugged him as my brother, determined to tell the story to my dad's new friend, Ben. It was the preacher on the radio, through whom he had received his great salvation! It was the same Ben Haden my daddy was taking to and from cancer treatments! And we rejoiced together!

I wanted to know what it was like to be with Ben Haden for hours and hours! "*Dad, please tell me. I cannot even imagine what it must be like. It must really be incredible to spend time with Ben, and for him to call you his friend!*"

Over the years, my godly father received from the Lord many profound sayings, from thousands of hours of Bible study, ministry, and especially compassionate visitation. But on that day, he simply replied: "*Son, I listen mostly.*"

In this moment, please listen to the Voice of Jesus. He taught His disciples, “*My sheep hear My voice*” (John 10:27), and we must, despite our awe or doubt or fear, hear and understand this Scripture to be **literal**.

If we were only physical beings, of course, we would expect to hear Him with our ears. But we are much more than human bodies! We are human **beings**, and the crux of being made “in the image of” God, “Who is Spirit,” is that we are composed of both spirit and matter. Therefore, we are able to hear and know spiritual things spiritually by faith and through our relationship to God in Jesus Christ. For more on our human makeup, I recommend the poetic words of Solomon, a king of Israel who was gifted with wisdom. Please read Ecclesiastes 12, esp. verses 6-7. You and I can hear our Father! We have a living connection, a soul-embrace! We are in fact one with God in Christ!

As we study the Gospels and the Epistles, we listen mostly, and **we get glimpses of how Jesus depended completely on the Father**. We see that **He relied totally on the Father**. We read and realize that **He did nothing and said nothing that was not from the Father, Who literally was His Life**.

Listen to Jesus’ appeal to Philip (John 14:9-11):

“Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? [Even] The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works [of the Father through Me – implied] themselves” (emphasis - dc).

The apostle Paul echoes those incredibly revealing words of Jesus, as he reproves and teaches the believers at Galatia:

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh [my body] I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20, emphasis – dc).

In these passages can you see the **Glimp**? Can you hear the message? *It is not me, but Christ in me, living through me*. Young Jesus astounded the Temple elders, *but it was the Father in and through Him doing the astounding!*

Luke 2:41-52 describes a very tension-filled story. Did you notice how **long** Jesus was there, inquiring and teaching them? Three days! Ding, ding, ding, red flags, giant sky-sailing blimps! Three days! Jonah and the Whale! The Cross and the empty tomb of Jesus! This must be an amazing **glimpse** of life and death (death and LIFE)! We can’t afford to miss it! We can’t afford to miss Grace (Hebrews 12:15a), **or** to let others miss it! Imagine Jesus speaking:

[Jesus]: “*Mom, dad, I’m really sorry, but I MUST be about my Father’s Business!*”

[Joseph]: “*Wait, buddy, what **Business** is that?! I am really trying to be patient with you, Jesus - to teach you **my trade**. You are going to be a **great** carpenter one day - **if** you can keep from being so easily distracted.*”

[Jesus]: "Oh, dear Papa Joe, you have **no idea** all that I am going to do with just a couple of pieces of wood."

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¹ For more information about Pastor Ben Haden and the *Changed Lives* religious broadcast, go to changedlives.org

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