

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, September 04, 2011
Taken for Granted

Every once in a while we are hit with something that causes us to realize how much we take for granted. Hurricane Irene did that for me. We lost power last Sunday night as many did. When I looked for a generator I found that they were all sold out and then when a store got some in they overcharged for them because they could. I was able to borrow one from someone who got their power back on. It was great having power again, however I found out that the price we pay for electricity is far less than what it costs to run a gas generator, 12 times less! We take so much for granted, i.e. we don't think about what we have or what is most important. We don't mean to let it happen. It just sneaks up on us as we get caught up in the daily routines of life.

I believe we do the same thing with God. He is a loving Father who longs to have a relationship with those he loves. He has great plans for us, but we get so caught up in our minutia that we don't give him the time he deserves. We talked about developing a culture of Honor in our last service and the one who deserves it most many times gets overlooked. We have so much going on that we don't stop to think about our actions. There is a commercial of an ex-smoker with COPD and emphysema. It tells of how we take for granted our ability to breathe. Remember this old Christian chorus we sang? *This is the air I breathe. This is the air I breathe. Your holy presence living in me. And I... I'm desperate for you.* He is the air we breathe. The writer to the Hebrews reveals that God is actively involved in the ongoing existence of his creation.

Hebrews 1:1-3 (NIV)

¹*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,* ²*but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.* ³*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, **sustaining all things by his powerful word.** After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (emphasis mine) He should not be given a back seat to anything we're doing. We need to give him preeminence in everything. Jesus even said, "Apart from me you can do nothing."*

Another area that we can take for granted is the calling in our own lives to live like Jesus lived. We have been given a divine destiny to be conformed into the image of the Son of God. Jesus died on the cross for our sins in order to set us free to become what God had originally intended for us. He told us that we would do what he did. We can get so used to living with earthly limitations that we don't reach higher to the calling God has given us. There are some limitations that we need to address, but we can't allow them to transfer into all areas. I have been a builder and was fearless on roofs. Yesterday I climbed up a ladder 26 feet to clean out the gutter that was clogged and not able to handle all the water that Hurricane Irene produced. As I climbed up on the roof and fixed a couple of leaks, I found that my youthful agility has left me. Go figure! It doesn't occur to us that this ageing process is taking place until put to the test. However, this does not apply to other areas of my life. Jesus said in **Matthew 17:20 (NIV)** that reason the disciples could not do something was: *"Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. **Nothing will be impossible for you.**" (emphasis mine).* We shouldn't limit ourselves. The Apostle Paul said in **Philippians 4:13 (NIV)** ¹³***I can do everything through him who gives me strength.***

In the Book of Judges an angel appeared to Gideon as he was hiding in the winepress and, no doubt, not feeling all that courageous when he hears the angel say *"**The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.**"* Gideon responds with: *"**if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?**"* The angel doesn't even dignify it with an answer and tells him to go in the strength he has. Gideon replies with another negative comment and then the Lord spoke to him and said, *"I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."*

Let's not take the Lord or ourselves for granted. Let's honor him and walk in the calling he's given us. We are all called to advance his Kingdom and glorify his name by doing what he told us we could do.