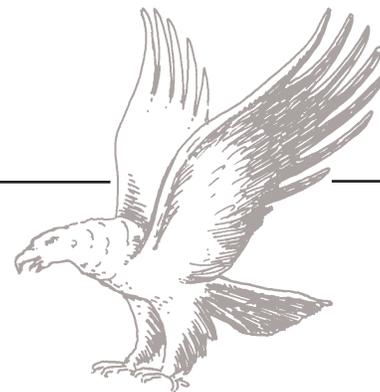


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



October 19, 2014

The Amazing Jesus

Jesus' original audiences were blown away by His teaching and His miracles. We can't duplicate that experience today, but with the right approach to His story, we can come close.

“So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. . . . And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority. . . . Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, ‘What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out’” (Lk. 4:22, 32, 36).



In the space of a few verses, Luke uses several words to describe how people reacted to the early ministry of Jesus: they “marveled . . . were astonished . . . were amazed.” Jesus' teaching and miracles were unlike anything these people had seen before, and they reacted accordingly.

Today, that spirit of amazement is much more subdued. We are so far removed from His life that many people respect Him as merely a wise teacher or social reformer, but nothing more. Some shrug off the details of His story as pure mythology. Even among those who embrace Him as the Son of God, there is a struggle to feel that same sense of

wonder at what He did. We have heard the story so many times that we've become desensitized to the revolutionary nature of His work.

How can we moderns recapture the sense of amazement that these early audiences felt? Or is it even possible? It is possible, but it requires that we take the right approach.

Have you noticed that we tend to gravitate to the epistles as the more important “how to” part of God's revelation? But the epistles point us back to the gospel story as the foundation of our faith. So restoring our awe at the Jesus story begins with *spending more time in the gospels*. When we read those accounts, we're looking at people who spent a good deal of time physically with Jesus. They heard His teachings with their own ears and witnessed the miracles with their own eyes. They were totally immersed in His work. If we would read the gospels more often and with greater intensity—not as dry pedagogy, but as eyewitness accounts of an extraordinary moment in history—we would begin to feel the same “wow” fac-

tor as those who originally experienced it. Our exposure takes a different form than that of the original witnesses, but the impact can be just as dramatic, once we open our eyes to see it.

Then as we become more familiar with the story of Jesus in the gospels, we should *personalize the message in our own lives*. Those early witnesses were captivated by what they saw and heard because it exposed their lives to closer scrutiny. He opened their eyes and hearts to a new perspective on how the world works, giving them insights that rocked their world. In the same manner, we constantly should be asking ourselves: How does this teaching or that incident apply to *me*? How does this information help me understand experiences in *my own* life? What weaknesses does this story reveal in *my* character? Once we begin to see the influence of Jesus reshaping our thinking and behavior, the sense of excitement will be exhilarating.

Jesus can still amaze people today—but only those who open their eyes to really see what He did while among us.

—David King