

Catch the Darn Ball

Disclaimer: Those of you who know how to play catch with God can disregard this viewpoint or continue to read on for your amusement. For those of you who don't know how...

I am lucky. Every day I get this gift of a walk. I try for a mile, sometimes getting a little more, but usually just the mile. It's not something I always want to do, in fact I usually don't. But because of the conditions I deal with physically, it's critical that I do it. See – I am lucky to have such a gift. Many people would love to have this gift of having to walk a mile, many people who can't walk.

Lots of things come and go in my head during these walks. I get some great thoughts on these treks, more gifts on top of an already great one. Then there are the scenery presents. This creates an overload condition, even overwhelmed! I start out in a forest of giant white pines. They are full of pine talk as I pass underneath boughs massive enough to be trees themselves. Then I go by a denser forest of poplars, giant red oaks, wild sumac and all kinds of lush green things (at least a few months out of the year). I wish I knew what they all were. I walk down and back up a hill lined with old seaside cottages, many of them the 'On Golden Pond' type. There is the hemlock grove, whose tiptops jutting sixty or more feet in the air remind me of church spires. And of course the sea is usually talking its relentless wave chatter, sometimes a lapping, sometimes a roar.

I have a friend that goes with me. Aside from the wonder of her presence, she is a source of amusement, another reward. I take this little round dirty yellow thing with me. It used to look like a florescent green tennis ball. Now it's... well, it's still round. This friend absolutely thinks this little round thing is the best thing ever made, the world's finest toy. She is near hysterics in anticipation of getting to chase it. Boy, does she chase it. Over and over and over, I throw it. Over and over and over she runs it down and brings it back immediately for more. The look on her face as she comes galloping back with that thing in her mouth is one of pure joy. 'Do it again', she pleads between slobbering pants. So I throw it again and again, laughing at her acrobatics as she leaps to catch it, sometimes succeeding and sometimes just poking it further down the road, which results in an even madder scramble, legs going every which way as she tries to change direction instantly to follow the ball's altered course.

As she continued to bring it back to me I thought about the number of balls God tosses us. The dog rarely, if ever, succumbs to temptations that would interrupt this grand game. She passes on chasing squirrels, other dogs, or even saying hi to people, one of her favorite things to do. It seems we humans either don't chase the ball, or drop it to investigate something that interests us more. Of course God just chucks out another one. And so many of us keep on ignoring these balls God tosses us, these gifts. I wonder what would happen if we were more like this dog friend of mine, and always brought the ball back to Him. It's interesting when she doesn't bring it back right away, when some scent finally gets the better of her, tempts her. That special fun we're having gets interrupted, degenerating into a conflict of wills. Maybe this is what happens when we carry the ball where we want, instead of bringing it back to God.

I have some realization of God. I don't understand Him, that would be impossible. Only He could understand Him. But I have a realization of Him, His Son Whom He gave us, and His Spirit, our true Source of life. I know people, who don't. It doesn't matter what I say, what I write, I can't seem to get through to them. They choose not to be aware of Him, at least not much. They rarely see what's right with things, and often see what's wrong. I find myself begging God to get them to recognize just one of the uncountable gifts, the balls He throws out for them and everyone. Just one.

And then I hope they catch it, and bring it back to Him. The gift of joy will take them by such a surprise, they will never go back to their own way. And maybe they'll realize how many other gifts of God are tossed in their direction every day.

Please God, do it again.

And you. Yes you! Catch the darn thing!

Clement