

The Skies

I've spent a lot of time in the sky recently. (And, to clarify, that's very different than having my head in the clouds!) A flight from the U.S. to Singapore, then on to Bangladesh, followed by a return trip, and flights to Texas, Georgia, Arizona, and California kept me in the heavens for a substantial time over the last three weeks.

Trips like that can seem predictable: check-in, boarding pass, water bottle, waiting, boarding, sitting sardine-style in a metal tube .. and then nearly the same process in reverse. But if you go deeper than the basic drudgery of commercial flight, there's a little something the Father created for His sheep to enjoy. If you're not careful, you'll miss it.

It's the skies and the unique beauty they hold.

The shades of blue, red, orange and yellow at sunrise and sunset can be explosive and captivating. The shades of gray, from cool to slate, during times of storm can fascinate and enchant. But the clouds ... oh, the clouds! Sometimes more breathtaking and other times more ominous, if I make time to take in the view they offer, they never cease to amaze.

Wikipedia will tell you there are ten types of clouds, TwistedSifter will show you 15 incredible formations, and experienced sailors will predict the weather based on what the skies reveal. But it's pretty basic for me: God is an incredible artist.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Psalm 19:1

David saw it during peaceful moments with his sheep. I picture him lying on the ground, hands folded behind his

head and looking up in total amazement of what God spoke into existence.

Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher, spoke of it when he said, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder and awe, the more often and the more seriously reflection concentrates upon them: the starry heaven above me and the moral law within me."

Serious reflection and truly "taking in" God's creation require time. Not hours. Just moments, sometimes seconds. But it also requires intentionality. Deliberately, on purpose, stopping and gazing, taking a deep breath, and staring at the skies long enough to see the uniqueness of every cloud creation and appreciating the gifts the Designer has given us in their beauty.

Valuing the uniqueness of the sheep in our lives requires the same. Purposeful moments reflecting on the gift we've been given in the team members we serve, the children we love, or the parishioners we influence.

As the clouds grace the skies, so they grace our lives. May you celebrate that gift today...

Diving Deeper Questions

How has God graced your life?

How does that effect the way you shepherd the people in your life?

Just as we often fail to appreciate the beautiful sky above us, are there people in your life you need to appreciate more deeply?

What will you do to show that appreciation?