



For the Journey

Nov. 13/25 - Rev. Dave Crawford

Back in 1993 Neil Young wrote a unusual, haunting song titled “Pocahontas” which begins with the phrase, “Aurora borealis, the icy sky at night”. His is just one of countless descriptions of this awe-inspiring gift of nature we’ve witnessed lately, it seems, with particular grandeur. The Northern Lights. How would you describe the phenomenon? What words?

Lao Tzu (born 571 BC) is said to have written this of the aurora borealis:

“From wonder into wonder existence opens”. Stephen Greenleaf Bullfinch (1809-1870) offered his own poetic take: “Amid the majesty of night, What splendid vision strikes my eyes, In glory bursting on the sight, Forth from the northern skies?” Well-known American novelist Jack London (1876-1916) penned these words in The Call of the Wild: “With the aurora borealis flaming coldly overhead, or the stars leaping in the frost dance, and the land numb and frozen under its pall of snow, the song of the huskies might have been the defiance of life, only it was pitched in minor key, with long-drawn wailings and half-sobs, and was more the pleading of life, the articulate travail of existence.”

The photo at left was taken by one of my nephews two nights back. There were many similar pics posted to various social media sights by hundreds of people that night. My nephew sent this photo to me as a personal reminder of life’s giftedness. We all need such reminders from time to time, so I’m grateful for the photo, and my nephew.

It is so easy for us to become overly stressed with daily life, isn't it? The *"peace that surpasses all understanding"* (Philippians 4:7) is sometimes difficult to access when we're worried about tariffs and a faltering economy, the war in Ukraine, and civil unrest in many areas of our world. Yet the One who launched our universe with the Big Bang, and who scripture claims *"set the stars in their courses"*, is the same One who comes to us in Christ with not only counter-cultural teachings on holiness and goodness but promises of a Creator whose connection to our fate is unshakeable, eternal, and marked by grace. In response to an uncertain world and uncertain future Paul in Philippians offers a roadmap of sorts: *"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you."* (Philippians 4:8-9). When life's worries threaten to overwhelm us, what are we to do? Paul says "Keep on doing.... Keep on loving, and forgiving, and hoping, and praising, and serving, and believing, and experiencing... and God's peace will be with you.

I haven't traveled a great deal in recent years but I remember the gleaming, pristine beaches of Mozambique, the cool, invigorating sea air of an autumn Vancouver morning, the quiet, contemplative moments resting at the far end of Lake Agnes, and the many glorious sunset drives on the way home from Crossfield. We need these spiritual connections with nature. God has created a world that gives us pleasure and peace, deeply felt, which we might call, in our more connected moments - Eden. And no matter how much we human beings mess-up the Garden, God's faithfulness remains true, God's love remains forever. Our unknown future will be God's future, and therefore it will be well, come what may.

Miho and I hope for more evening moments of dazzling atmospheric glory. Maybe we all do. We relish such moments, and the photos shared by friends and family, and the God who made our world in such a wondrous way.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Dave.

