

Just a Minute..

Jeremiah 32:18,20 "You are a great and powerful God; you are the LORD Almighty. Long ago you performed miracles and wonders in Egypt, and you have continued to perform them to this day, both in Israel and among all the other nations, so that you are now known everywhere." (GNB)



I have just returned from Lebanon where I had the great joy and privilege of meeting several believers who have crossed the border between Lebanon and Syria as refugees, but entered eternity with a new-found faith in Christ. One 13-year old girl boldly shared how she found Christ in the midst of the war. As an 8-year-old girl she and her family had to leave everything behind as they fled from their home city, Aleppo, to Lebanon. While travelling in a convoy, a bomb fell close to their car and a fellow traveler died in her arms. All she remembers was her bloody hands and how scared she was. *"But if it wasn't for the war I would never know Jesus,"* she shared. She concluded her testimony with these profound words: *"There WILL be a revival in Syria and we are the generation that will do it."*

Oh, how divine and momentous are the ways of God!

I read a sermon on the internet recently (for this one I would prefer not to provide the source) of a pastor who asked this question: *"Does church bore you?"* He then confessed that before he had to plan worship services, come up to the front and preach and lead all the different aspects of the worship service, he too would say that church bored him. As encouragement he then said that **we are allowed to be bored by church sometimes**. He concluded with these words ***"But shouldn't we be okay with it if every single worship service doesn't get our blood flowing. We can't be on a spiritual high all the time."***

Oh, may the Lord have mercy on us. It's not about spiritual highs or lows. It's about intimacy. We have exchanged our momentous daily encounters with a living God, and seeing miracles and wonders as daily events, into a boring, sceptical Sunday faith. And worst of all, we are content with it and find it acceptable. We might find our delight in the Lord but continue to sit in the same pew Sunday after Sunday while doing that.

No, I'm not going to make you feel good about being bored. If you are, then you are the one to blame, not your faith, and most of all not God. God the Creator, miracle worker, Saviour of souls, the One who separated the oceans and made time stand still, the One who healed the sick and raised the dead, this God is not a boring God. Following Him can only become boring when we settle into behavioural habits; good habits maybe, but nonetheless behavioural habits that lead to death. According to *Wikiquote*: *"Habits are automatic routines of behaviour that are repeated regularly, without thinking. They are learned, not instinctive, human behaviours that occur automatically, without the explicit contemporaneous intention of the person."*

The one sure test to see if you have stagnated in your behavioural capacity is to ask this simple question: *Is my faith habitual?* In other words, do I do what I do because I am used to doing what I do? Do I go to Church Sunday after Sunday, and Bible studies on Wednesdays, because that is the way it's done? If the answer is yes or even "from time to time" then you are in desperate need to escape from a mundane religion to a momentous faith.

But be warned, a taste of the momentous God we serve will leave you breathless and totally discontent with the mundane. This will not only create a desire to "taste more" but also push you out of complacency into the urgent. Whether you encounter God in the mission field or the market place, your movement from the mundane to the momentous will thrust you from the complacent to the critical.

It is true, what Jim Rohn rightly proclaimed: *"Without a sense of urgency, desire loses its value"*. This applies to the spiritual life of every believer. If we lose the sense of urgency for people to be redeemed, we lose the value of the cross. This is unmistakably a part of the character of Christ.

Just like Jesus, we must develop a clear sense of our mission in the context of the season we find ourselves in, so that we can invest our time wisely with God's calling in mind. There are many good things we can do, but the good can become the enemy of the best, unless we focus intentionally on addressing the priorities and urgencies of our time.

The greatest threat to experiencing a momentous God and a resolved focus is the busyness of non-essentials that absorb our attention and time. We live in a future-oriented culture that relates time largely to efficiency and productivity instead of urgency and priority.

In the series CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE¹ the author explores the reality that the civil religion of the Western World worships the god of progress and inspires us to compete, achieve, and win for the sake of competing, achieving, and winning. Life for many has been colourfully described as a matter of "blowing & going, plotting & planning, ducking & diving, running & gunning, slamming & jamming, moving & shaking, shoving & jiving".

Longshoreman philosopher Eric Hoffer wrote: "*We are warned not to waste time, but we are brought up to waste our lives.*" This is evident in the tragedy of many people who in the first half of their lives spend their health looking for wealth, and in the last half spend their wealth looking for health.

We often miss out on the unique opportunities presented to us because we are dominated by excessive Christian activities that do not reflect the urgency of our times. Gordon Dahl puts it this way: "*Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, and to play at their worship.*"

Meeting the Syrian refugees in Lebanon deeply renewed my passion to seize every seasonal opportunity with new energy, new intent and new urgency. **It literally is now or never.** But every challenge and every need are equally balanced by divine opportunities. Please join us in prayer and join us in supporting and strengthening the local Church that serves to the point of exhaustion.

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/2-process-spirituality-being-versus-doing>