

## MARK'S REMARKS

As I sit down this morning, I am a cyclone of thoughts that are not necessarily connected or spiraling in the same direction. Like a dust cloud blowing through an Iowa field, my thoughts spin randomly, challenging me to funnel them into something meaningful. Let's see what happens.

I am thinking of angels. Do they wisp like the wind embodying no form or do they come in a shape to which we can recognize and relate? Are they a combination of the two? Do I have my own? How do angels and the Trinity work together? Do they have the ability of compassionate facial expressions? Only God is omnipotent, so as they carry out the will and purposes of God what is the limit of their power?

Steven Curtis Chapman sings angels may be able to tell the story of creation but the story of grace can only be told by those saved by such. Angels, created higher, fall lower. A fallen angel will never know grace; in fact it will be its enemy.

The thoughts of angels lead to thoughts of my brother Jim. There are times when I long to talk with him and be in his presence. I simply miss him. I remember Jim as a brother who included me in his life, and I long to include him in mine.

Jim was taken from an asphalt highway to a golden highway in a car/bicycle accident immediately behind my older brother and me as we rode a bike only a few feet ahead of Jim. Was an angel sent by God to spare my life? Was this angel also involved as a .22 caliber bullet traveled upward within my leg preventing any serious or permanent damage? Were the fingers of this angel turning my head at the last possible moment, allowing me to narrowly escape death as a 46mph Burlington Northern locomotive pounded and spun a Chevy Cavalier? *That was a close one.*

Along with angels and a brother, I am thinking about two C.S. Lewis quotes taken from The Great Divorce. The first; *"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done...'"*

The second; *"There is but one good; that is God. Everything else is good when it looks to Him and bad when it turns from Him. And the higher and mightier it is in the natural order, the more demoniac it will be if it rebels. It's not out of bad mice or bad fleas you make demons, but out of bad archangels."*

I am uncertain how these thoughts connect and less certain if I really want to funnel them into something concise. Maybe arriving at conclusions shouldn't always be the desired end. Certainly there is good and evil. Along with fallen angels, humanity rebelled and acted upon the lie, 'My will done is better than His will done,' and hence we find ourselves enclosed within the boxing ring of wills; ours vs. His.

One is always good. The other is only good when it looks to Him. Therefore, in salvation or death, companionship or loneliness, resolutions or questions, in the whirlwinds of thought and life, I... am called...to look at Him. Author Oz Guinness would express we are called to live a life *"before one audience that trumps all others—the Audience of One."*

As I am confident of His enfolding gaze, may He find the gaze of His child more frequent, more trusting, and more thankful, leading not to rebellion but compliance.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts but especially this month, I must say, "Thank you for listening."

*"If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:9-12).*

*"But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign LORD; in you I take refuge" (Psalm 141:8a).*

Traveling,

Pastor Mark