

*The famous atheist, Richard Dawkins, doesn't only believe "there is no God" – he doesn't want **you** to believe there's a god. That's why he wrote the book, "The God Delusion". (or maybe he wrote it to make money" [maybe his purposes aren't as 'noble' as he wants people to believe]...)*

*But the thing is, by world standards, this bloke is a brilliant man. He's very highly educated, (an evolutionary biologist), and he's been an oxford professor... But when it comes to God, he sees Christianity as a disease people suffer and need to be cured of...*

*And he says things like:*

*"Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence."<sup>i</sup>*

*(in other words, he reckons, If you believe in God, you're an idiot [my translation – not his])*

*Stephen Hawking: There's another atheist, who was also, a brilliant man (by world standards.) – a professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, and a big-time theoretical physicist and cosmologist.*

*Notice I used the word "was" ... In 2018, he died. But in his final book, which he wrote just before he died, and was posthumously published, he said "there is no god"<sup>ii</sup> ... Which is pretty consistent with what he'd said many times before...*

*I can confidently tell you, that since his death, I'm pretty sure he's changed his mind on that. "There truly **is** a God, and sadly, he's probably in that place described as a place of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth'" ...*

But this is the way it's always been... The highly educated will often have an arrogance about them, that "I know stuff. And you're an idiot for believing in God"....

How many times have "the wise" looked down their nose at Christians and accused us of being gullible simpletons, and believing in fairy-tales... How many times have they accused people of faith of being childish and not having an adult's sense of reason???

You know what?: If "the wise" consider me "a little child" because of what I believe, well **hallelujah!**, because Jesus does too... He keeps himself **hidden** from those who are full of themselves, and who think highly of their own wisdom,, But oh how wonderful it is, that He has revealed Himself to us, as simple as we are...

It's not research/education/worldly, "wise thinking", that brings us to an understanding of God. By God's gracious will, it is kept hidden from such... And God the Father, is **only** revealed to those whom Jesus (the Son of God) **chooses** to reveal Himself to...

And Jesus praises God, that this is the way it is... "**I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.**

Today I want us to consider, “Where is my contentment in Christ?” What’s the highlight for you and me, in our journey of faith???

You see, last week Jesus was sending 72 of his disciples out on mission, and there’s a been a bit of a running theme over the last few weeks, about how Disciples of Jesus will often be rejected; despised; ridiculed, for what we believe, and for proclaiming the Good News of Jesus “That the Kingdom of God has come near”....

Now, in a world, where we hold on to our faith in Jesus, and bare the disdain of those who would mock us for doing so,, what do we focus on as vindication/proof that “Hey yeah, we’re on the right side of this???”

Well, when the 72 disciples (that Jesus had sent out) came back to Him and give their report, it was like “**Woo Hoo!!! We got power man!!!**”.... “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!”

To me this seems like “Yeah, we showed ‘em!... There’s the vindication – there’s the proof of the pudding...”

And Jesus said, “Yep”... **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.**

And then He explained to them that they have authority –  
**authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and  
over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall  
hurt you**

And we see evidence of this – I think of the Apostle Paul,  
when he was on his way to Rome, and they had a bonfire  
(Malta), and a snake came out of the fire and bit Paul... And  
the locals who are familiar with that type of snake, fully  
expected Paul was going to get very sick and die,, but he  
didn't...

And I think of Revelation 9, where locusts with the power of  
scorpions will be released upon the earth, but those who have  
the seal of God on them, won't be tormented by them...

*But I also think of a Christian family I've met (I think they're  
out Quilpie way) (The Bain family): Their son, Isaac (himself  
a strong Christian) was bitten by a snake, and through prayer  
and medical treatment, he lived... But a few years later, he  
was aerial mustering, and died when his plane crashed...*

... In His sovereignty (That means: God is King – what He  
decides, shall be) – In His Sovereignty, God will sometimes  
save us from all sorts of physical and spiritual dangers. But  
not always...

Paul survived the snake-bite, but went on to be executed in  
Rome.

Some folk like to claim these words of Jesus as an all-encompassing promise, for them to apply at **their** will. After all, Jesus said “**and nothing shall hurt you**”,,, And yet we also know that Jesus promised his disciples persecution, suffering, and even death,,, simply for being His faithful disciples...

And so we realise that Jesus is pointing to something **greater** here – something **greater** than physical preservation... And something even more **exciting** than victory over demons...

**“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.**

**<sup>19</sup> Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.**

But so what??? He says, BUT, **do not rejoice in this**, Alright, don't get all hyped-up and woo hoo, we got the power.... **do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”**

You see, some folk get all hyped up and excited about some kind of power-rush we have... But Jesus is saying, if you're getting all excited about some kind of spiritual power-rush, get over it... Do **not** rejoice over that **but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**

So, here's a lesson for us: When we are on mission in the Name of Jesus, at times (by God's gracious will), He will spiritually protect us from all sorts of dangers – Spiritual Dangers & physical dangers... And we will see a demonstration of the Lord's mighty victory over Satan and His demons...

But that's not what we get excited about... Rejoice that your names are written in heaven...

In the world's eyes, you may be a simpleton (I know I am), because you believe that Jesus died on the cross to save you from your sins.... They might accuse you of believing in fairy-tales, because you aren't consumed by **this** world and **this** life – Instead, you're joyously looking forward to the coming of the Kingdom of God, and life everlasting...

The worldly-wise – the high-falutin academics, they won't get it (you see). It's hidden from them... That Richard Dawkins bloke, he said:

*“Be thankful that you have a life, and forsake your vain and presumptuous desire for a second one.”<sup>iii</sup>*

Do we listen to Mr Dawkins and his followers? No, we do not. We listen to the Lord Jesus. Jesus said the exact opposite..., **rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**

And we can know this, because we are living in a truly blessed era...

There's something significant here: Jesus said this in private – He often made some of his most significant statements in private.

V<sup>23</sup> Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! <sup>24</sup> For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

It was only with the coming of Jesus, that God's plan for salvation was fully revealed. This is the hinge of human history, where Jesus the Son of God, came to this world, to bring salvation.

And you and I are living in this same era, where we can hear the teaching of Jesus; and we have the testimony of the Apostles; And our eyes observe the greatest of miracles – the salvation of a sinner – not because they are wise by worldly standards, but because by God's grace, He has chosen to reveal Himself to them.....

The prophets had looked forwards to this, but they didn't actually get to see it. And many kings longed to see the coming of the **King** of Kings,, but they never got to see it...

What a privilege it was, for those Disciples of Jesus, and what a privilege it is for us...

I said at the start:

Today I want us to consider, “Where is my contentment in Christ?” What’s the highlight for you, in your journey of faith???

Well, this is it. Rejoice in the revelation of God – God has revealed Himself... And you don’t need a preacher to give you revelation; and you don’t need a high-falutin education to have this revelation...

**rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**

because God has revealed Himself to you.

Let’s pray the prayer of our Lord Jesus. No, not “The Lord’s Prayer”, this one.

“We thank you, Father,  
Lord of heaven and earth,  
that You have hidden these things from the wise and  
understanding,  
and revealed them to little children;  
yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

<sup>22</sup> All things have been handed over  
to our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by You His Father,

And no one knows who the Son is except the Father,  
or who the Father is except the Son



and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

And so we thank You, Lord Jesus,  
that You reveal yourself to us.

We repent of our sin,  
And we believe in Your Name;  
And we commit ourselves to You again;

And we rejoice, that by the grace of God,  
our names are written in Heaven.

Praise the Lord,  
Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Richard Dawkins' Speech at the Edinburgh International Science Festival (April 15, 1992);  
quoted in "EDITORIAL: A scientist's case against God", "The Independent"(London), (p.  
17), April 20, 1992.

<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/73891>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://nypost.com/2018/10/17/stephen-hawking-final-book-there-is-no-god/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/354912>