

Struggling Mystic

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2015

On Jesus charging cell phones

"The most incredible thing happened. I was doing sermon prep, got called away and returned. My phone was flat but I put it on top of my Bible when I left and when I returned, my phone had charged. This is a little Jesus miracle."



So Joy informed me as we drove along to an appointment. Joy is a Duke student placed in my church as part of an overseas summer internship program. We receive a student every year around this time. Joy is also African to her core - born Congolese, she immigrated to the US as a young woman, received her calling and recently entered ministerial training. As such - with Congolese and American influences running thick through her veins - she has this delightfully exotic way of speaking; as a person she is eager, open, beautifully alive and it is all on show through her speech - the crisp, bright punctuating of vowel sounds making her sentiment sparkle to life. For an aging cynic like me though, *this* accent mixed with *that* sentiment is just a little too much.

'You can't be serious, Joy.'

'Oh, I'm serious!' Or words to that effect. 'I see Jesus every day.'

'Ja, no, I get that.' (Well actually I don't. I can't attest to seeing Jesus every day, for the rather pathetic reason of not *really* looking. Well, not *every* day.)

'I get that you see Jesus every day, but you can't be serious about Jesus charging your cell phone.' Exasperation was beginning to show; we've had Duke students coming through these doors for some years now, and I've never heard this kind of theology spoken.

'I see Jesus every day! My phone was dead and then it was charged.' It had that kind of John 9 feel to it - *I was blind but now I see!* - except, well, this was a great deal more technological. Miracles 21st century style.

'I really don't think Jesus cares for charging cell phones Joy. I think, with starving children in Ethiopia, Jesus might have his hands full with more serious issues than your dead battery.'

And I thought to myself: What would cynics do without the starving masses in Africa?

It also struck me that suggesting Almighty God might rule the universe but helping out Joy in South Africa at the expense of the poor people of Ethiopia might be robbing God of a multi-tasking gift that should be well within the Ground of All Being's wheelhouse.

'That... That... That is nonsense. You sound like those people who see God in their toast once their level-6 white bread has popped. Or worse, it's like a Vending Machine God thing where God is there to do your bidding. God is not into charging cell phones Joy. I'm putting this onto your feedback-sheet-list thingy that I have to submit.' (Increasingly, as Joy and I have grown closer I've threatened her more and more with this report even though, for the life of me, I cannot remember the name of that blasted form.)



'What do I write? Things were going swimmingly till Joy found Jesus in her cell phone? Oh, and I wouldn't go telling the other students when you get together in Cape Town. No one wants to be the pariah in a gathering of theological students, trust me. Keep that kind of crazy talk to yourself.'

She smiled broadly. 'I see Jesus every day and my cell phone was dead then I put it on my Bible and it was charged.'

I will own up to the fact that by now I was getting a touch curious and began to wonder *how much* Jesus had charged the phone - all the way? Just 10%? 50%? And if not all the way, *why not* all the way? Would it be because it was part of a Little Miracle Package? I asked none of this, not wanting to encourage this particular topic of conversation and all.

'Jesus is probably trying to tell you something here, like charge your cell phone so that it works. That sounds like a sane God.'

'I see Jesus every day!' She smiles at me, this beautiful, innocent, nothing-you-say-will-dissuade-me smile and for a moment I wished Jesus would come to me that easily. And just for a moment, this hardened, aged faith-heart of mine remembered a more innocent time when I might have seen that, believed that. And I wondered for a moment if I'd grown, or lost my way.



I mean I know, and I think Joy would own up to this as well, that on one hand this is pretty ridiculous but I will say this: I've been around long enough to know that cynicism, disbelief, and a tired, dismissive skepticism of anything out of the ordinary is about the surest way to miss the workings of God in this world.

So yes, I would love to see Jesus every day. I would love to be given the eyes to see Jesus coming to me.

I would love that. And I would not mind one bit if he charged my cell phone while he did so. I can imagine that you know, Jesus talking to me, shooting the breeze, leaning over and while looking at me, touching my phone gently with his index finger. And winking.

Posted by Andrew at 10:58 AM



2 comments:

KevinD July 16, 2015 at 10:21 PM
I like this. Replace my skepticism with wonder - as in "I wonder why I don't think Jesus would surprise Joy with this small blessing?"
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Jane July 18, 2015 at 12:54 AM
Another gem - thank you Andrew :)
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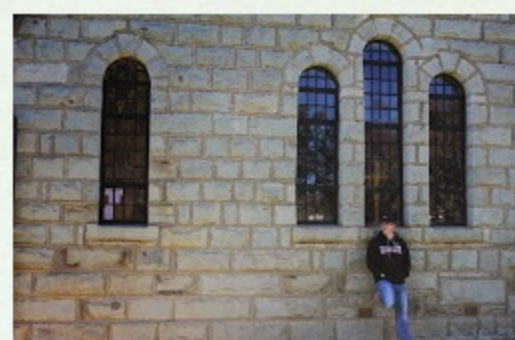
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 - [On turning 39](#)
 - [On Jesus charging cell phones](#)
 - April (3)
 - March (1)
- 2014 (17)
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