

## The Day I Knew There Was a God

The Day I Knew There Was a God was the title of Pastor Don's Sermon this past week and I must admit I was distracted by the title. My mind began to think about when I knew there was a God. Was there a specific time or event? The sermon was about Ruth, Naomi, and sacrifice, dedication, love, and faithfulness but also about Jesus' love for his friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha and the shortest verse in the Bible, 'Jesus wept.' As I listened my mind kept returning to the title. Was there a day, a specific time, an event when I knew? I thought back to my journey. It began with a very vengeful God. When I would hurt myself with a stubbed toe or some other instant hurt, my mother would tell me that I must have done something wrong, and God looked down and punished me. I associated God with bad, with vengefulness, with my lack of "grace," for want of a better word. God increased his vengefulness when he took my brother who was my protector, my advisor, my listener. I prayed for death to this vengeful God, and it was only when I had polio and did not die, and I asked why, and the answer was that God wanted me to live. It was the first time I had ever known God to be a forgiving God, a forgiving God that saw my pain and forgave my angry and heartbroken words. This was a God I wanted to know. Then I began my journey to believe, to know and to trust in God. But in truth our journey starts long before we know there is a God our journey starts before we are born. God sees the promise in us and loves us and has a plan for us even then before we are formed, that is God's Grace. Our journey may not be in a moment or in a day but in a lifetime, for each journey is unique.

Psalm 100 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his, we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise, give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of this day, may we be worthy of it. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve, comfort them. Be with our church, may we truly be the hands and feet of Christ, may we feed the hungry and aid the homeless. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and watch over him and his family. Be with our staff and leaders, bless their work and guide them. May our country truly be the United States, and may we remember those who have sacrificed so much for us. In Jesus name, Amen

Grace Epperson