
International House of Prayer of Greater Fort Wayne

...a day and night , city-wide, multi-church prayer and worship ministry

Make it Count

The poet Philip James Bailey first released his magnum opus “Festus” in 1839 that he later expanded in 1853 to say:

*We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best.*

In 1904 the poem was referenced in a remembrance written for a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania to say:

It does seem to us that his life was all too short. But a life cannot be measured by its length. For “we live in deeds, not years, in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial. We must count time by heart-throbs.”

Then in 1989 by Vicky Corona when writing about Tahitian Dance she wrote:

Remember that life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away!

Here we stand at the beginning of a new calendar year and I am fascinated by many of the common threads of conversation that fill our communication airways. Many reflecting on the ‘challenges’ of the last year that have affected everyone on the planet and our common hopes for a ‘better’ year ahead. As I write this article the eyes of our nation and many other nations of the earth are watching the count of the runoff election in the state of Georgia that we are told will impact who controls the agenda of Washington. Many are counting their stimulus monies, some are counting days until they pass. My point is there is no shortage of things to ‘count’. But what if this mystery of the life we inhabit is not counted by hours, days, years, party agenda....what if it is counted by something else? Sounds a little like the question Jesus was asked, “What must I do to inherit eternal life (the life to come - Luke 10:25-27)? Jesus reply? Here is what counts **‘love’!**

I am slowly coming to the very firm conviction that the early Church displayed great wisdom in calling men and women to live a calendar that began the year not with fireworks but with the remembrance of the coming of Jesus. They deliberately placed this remembrance as close to the darkest day of the year as possible—the winter solstice. Proclaiming, on the darkest day, -that light, life, beauty, and order has not only broken in upon the earth in the Person of Jesus but is now the very center of our lives. The place from which we ‘count’. We re-count His love displayed in the Communion we re-count His mercy displayed in every sunrise we re-count His Grace in the face of difficulty.

Am I suggesting that we all abandon our clocks and calendars? No. But I am strongly suggesting that as followers of Jesus we tune out demands to count our lives ONLY in minutes, hours, days, bank accounts, and party loss or victory. *‘One thing have I asked from the Lord, that I shall seek:....To behold the beauty of the Lord...’* Psalm 27:4. **Young David, anointed to become the most influential and powerful man on the planet, has discovered what counts!**

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And the secret is simply this: **Christ in you!**

Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. Col 1:27b, JB Phillips

How do I ‘make it count’? Beloved, I say this knowing that I risk offending some who read this but I must point out that MUCH of what we are called to give our time and attention towards is not really what counts! For real. Party systems, economies, and even dare I say a pandemic will come and go as they have come and gone in the past- what counts? **To behold!**

This word Behold in the Hebrew first shows up in the scriptures in Genesis 1:31 following the creation account ‘*God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good.*’ The Hebrew alphabet was a visual script so that each letter ‘looked’ like something people were familiar with. The letters used in the original word Behold look like a finger -pointing. It is much like what we would experience when standing in front of a gorgeous sunset and say to the person next to us ‘*look at that!*’. That is the meaning behind the word *Behold!* Interestingly, that is what we hear about God’s emotion towards what He made - which by the way included us! It’s a fair assumption to say God likes what He made - He said it was *very good.*

Now the last time this word shows up - it was in my daily reading today - Revelation 21:3 ‘*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying “Behold the tabernacle of God is among men and He will dwell among them and they will be His people and God Himself will be among them”.*’

Here is what we count - the majesty and magnificence of the God who has come to men! The Beauty and majesty of God who has come to dwell among men. The world is in chaos and confusion. Yes, but behold, God has broken in and now dwells among men and nothing in all of created order can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8). **Take a look at that!** God loves you and has come to dwell in us - it is Christ in us the Hope of Glory - Behold! Behold He has reconciled us to the Father and to one another and Behold He is coming again!

How do we behold? Perhaps one of the greatest gifts we could give ourselves and others around us to hear the words of young David as more than poetry but a deliberate decision of our life. My life will not be ordered by a calendar full of appointments but by a choice to gaze and behold!



Join Us As we Pray for our City

- Thursday 6—7 am—phone call meeting. Contact Ben @ 260-403-4948 to join.
- Friday—7pm
- On Zoom—833 669 278

With gratitude and integrity we steward your gifts. Thank you for partnering with the mission the Lord has given us in this hour as we partner with Him in His kingdom purposes.

Please make your **tax deductible** contribution to:

**IHOP Fort Wayne
5907 West Wallen Road,
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Ben and Denise, Please agree with us over these prayer needs for the next month...

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