

YEARN

FOURTH IN A 2023 SERIES ON PRAYER

In this series on prayer, yearn follows come, look, wait. Yearn is not a term that we use widely in our day-to-day language. We might be good at yawning or yawning, but not so good at yearning, or at least recognizing this quality. We tend to leave the yearning to those who cloister themselves away from the everyday world, to prayer, to contemplate, to meditate.

It's an abstract word that suggests some sort of longing....at a deeper level of our being

When I was younger, I can recall people older than me – saying – I am dying to see you.

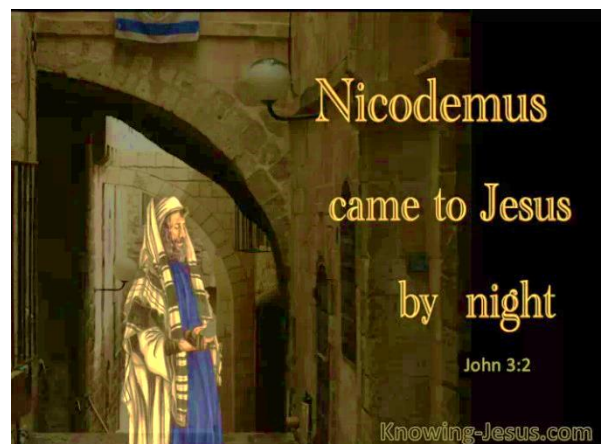
I am dying to find out what I am getting for my birthday.

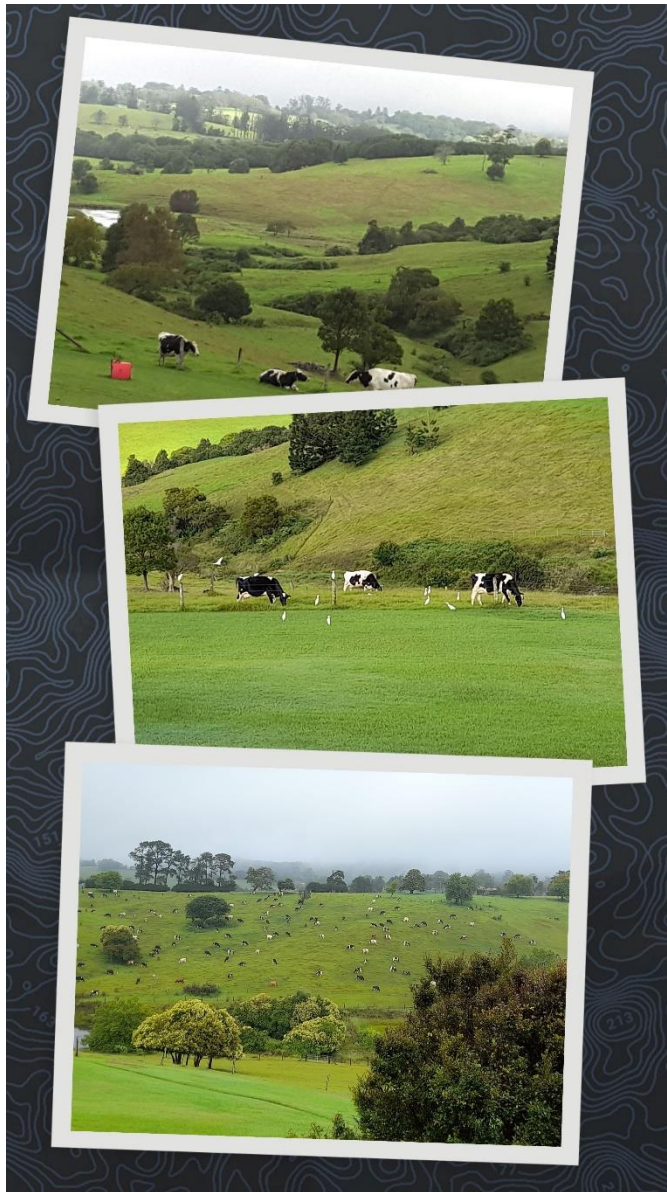
Now you don't literally "die", but there's a suggestion of an "inner ache" that comes from inside of you.

This might not be the perfect connotation, but it comes close to what we describe as a deep desire for God who lives within us. We see something of this in John 4 where Jesus says to the woman:

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

I'm wondering that today's world does not allow us much time for yearning – for God – or indeed for anything linked to our inner being. We are so busy with our fast-paced lives that we don't find time to just sit and allow the spirit of God to wash over us. When we try this and when it doesn't happen – we move on to other things. No time for staying.





The other day at dusk John Ruddle's cows were all lined up along our back fence: munching on sweet grass, quietly and almost still. Robyn said "Come and have a look at the cows. So peaceful". Murray hurried past and said, "I've only got 4 seconds!"

That might sound a bit over-exaggerated, but it typifies our failure to make time to acknowledge the Creator's presence around us and in doing so, to allow our hidden desire for God to rise to the surface of our conscious thought.

Recently we've been reading about Nicodemus and the woman at the well. On both occasions the characters revealed in different ways, their inner desire to encounter God.

Nicodemus expressed his deep desire to know more about the Spirit with his simple question: How can this be? This enabled Jesus to move the conversation to a deeper level. For Nicodemus it was about getting in touch with the "God within."

Jesus was very good at connecting with people where they were at, and

there are lots of other times when he did this in the Gospel of John.

For the woman at the well, it was her complicated and needy life that may have been suppressing her deep yearning for God. Because of her personal relationships she was ostracized by other women and forced to get water in the hottest part of the day – not like the respectable women in her community.

Yet Jesus, was able to bring her deeper yearning to the surface with one simple request – Will you give me a drink? What bubbled out of this question was the woman's deep desire for something, somebody that would satisfy her deep spiritual need for acceptance.

The Book of Psalms, is a treasure trove of yearning for God – of seeking after and searching for God in daily life. many were written from places of hurt, crying out to God and seeking him in the midst of pain and loss. There are countless examples.

Psalm 42: “Just like a deer that craves streams of water, my whole being craves you, God.”

Psalm 116: “I love the Lord because he hears my requests for mercy. I’ll call out to him as long as I live because he listens closely to me.”

When I reflect on how Jesus interacted with these two characters, I’m concluding that yearning does not have to be complicated. It can be as simple as “looking at the cows” Indeed, Robyn’s simple request the other evening, says it all:

COME.....move to another place

Take a LOOK.....

WAIT.. a moment for Nicodemus, it was at night, for the woman....the well. For Robyn and Ithe back fence....for those of you watching.....wherever God finds you....

Then may we YEARN and allow the spirit to wash over us.

Murray and Robyn Robertson

Video reflection

Follow the link to watch Murray and Robyn reading this reflection.

Want to delve deeper?

Check out the “Resources” section on the website below and read p.15-17 of the Week of Prayer 2023 series.

