

Pregnancy, the series, #6: What Will the Baby See? – Ephesians 1:17-23  
 Saint Marks UMC, Charleston, WV –Ascension Sunday (May 12) 2013

{17} I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, {18} so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, {19} and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. {20} God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, {21} far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. {22} And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, {23} which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

## CHAPTER ONE

Harvey woke up this morning, as he did nearly every morning, to the same routine. He was, if nothing else, a creature of habit. Today, as soon as his eyes opened, he remembered what today was going to involve: today, he had to meet with Jeff Langstrom, a mean spirited, tight-fisted, always smiling and complimenting, control freak. Today was a day that was going to tax Harvey's patience. He had already decided that he was going to put Jeff in his place. He'd had enough. And enough was enough.

By the time his feet hit the floor, Harvey realized that he was "in a mood" already. He hated that. He hated waking up crabby.

But **I.I.W.I.I.** – *it is what it is.*

Harvey glided into auto-pilot, doing the things he did every morning. Let the dog out the back door into the fenced yard, turn on the coffee pot, put the bagel into the toaster oven, get the newspaper off the front porch, let the dog back in, pour the coffee, spread the cream cheese on the bagel, take the bagel, coffee, and newspaper into the den, and begin his morning "in touch with the world" routine.

His habit was to spend twenty minutes there, munching the bagel, drinking the caffeine, and reading the paper. Then he would shower, dress, and go off into the big old, tough, nose-to-the-grindstone world, where he would make his mark, earn his way, and ... what was that third thing?

Be happy? That hadn't happened for any sustained time in, he couldn't remember when. Well, at least he would make his mark and earn his way.

Even his newspaper reading was habitualized. He turned to the sports section first. He had decided long ago that he would rather read about people's accomplishments before reading of their failures, which was the role of the front page. Sports first, obituaries next (just to make sure that his name was not there, and he had a reason to move forward), and then to the news. If he had time, he would do one of the mind exercise puzzles, for some mental floss.

Hmmm, his hockey team benched their goalie and held the other team scoreless. About time the coach realized what everyone else in the world seemed to know. Ah, the first OTA (organized team activity) for his NFL team was this weekend; thank goodness, the off season was no longer really an off season.

OK – obituaries: 88 year old, 92 year old, 89 year old, 32 year old: ouch! 67 year old, 42 year old – ouch, again! No, wait a minute: **“Harvey Longstreet, 42 years old...”**

Harvey quickly turned to the front of the paper to see the date; is this April 1? No, it's May. He scanned the front of the paper for indicia of authenticity, and it all seemed right.

Must have read it wrong. He's been doing that recently – seeing things that weren't there. Thinking the billboard read: “Big Dead,” when a second look said “Big Deal.”

He turned back to the obituaries to see it again. Sixth one down.

**“Harvey Longstreet, 42 years old, born January 19, 1971, died suddenly and unexpectedly. Longstreet was a local attorney, known for his many acts of ....”**

Son of a gun! He did read it right. That was him. If not him, his twin, who had the same name.

**“Harvey Longstreet, 42 years old, born January 19, 1971, died suddenly and unexpectedly. Longstreet was a local attorney, known for his many acts of kindness and generosity. He is survived by ....”**

Harvey let the paper slide from his hands. This was some kind of really sick joke that someone was playing on him. He didn't understand what it was about, but he was going to get to the bottom of this.

Enough of the newspaper for today. Besides, he'd ended up using his whole 20 minutes. Time to get going.

Harvey kept to the normal schedule for the rest of that morning. But the rest of that morning was anything but normal. It seemed like whatever he did, from his shower to his car ride to the office, to greeting his secretary, to each of his appointments – even the appointment with ol' phony-face, Jeff Langstrom – was under the influence of having read his own obituary – particularly as he ended up trying to live like someone **known for his many acts of kindness and generosity**. He was not about to mention it to anyone; he would not give the practical joker the satisfaction of thinking he or she had “got him.”

## CHAPTER TWO

That night, as was his custom, Harvey ended his day by going back to “his chair” in the den, sitting quietly, closing his eyes, reviewing his day, and giving thanks to God, along with any other prayers on his heart.

Tonight, as he followed his appointed routine, he realized that his day had somehow – besides in a fog of strangeness – also been a little different in a way that he could not quite place his finger on. The strangeness of the obituary he could have done without, but there had been something else that – well, something was there with a kind of nice glow. He gave thanks to God for his blessings, and particularly for having proved the obituary wrong – at least the part about being dead. But, just in case, he also put in a “now I lay me down to sleep” kind of closing on his prayer. Then he went to bed.

## CHAPTER THREE

The next day, the routine was pretty much the same as the day, and every day, before. However, what made the routine seem irksomely monotonous was the obituary section:

**“Harvey Longstreet, 42 years old, born January 19, 1971, died suddenly and unexpectedly. Longstreet was a local attorney, known for his many acts of kindness and generosity, and for the creative genius displayed in his short-lived writing career. He is survived by ....”**

That is not quite the same as yesterday’s, was it? **“Kindness and generosity”** he remembered. But **“creative genius in his short-lived writing career”**?

He’d always thought about writing. He’d always wanted to write.

He shook his head. This was way too strange. But maybe, he could carve out some time to actually do some writing.

## CHAPTER FOUR

Meanwhile, on just the other side of Harvey’s den – although he had not yet been able to see them, two people sat watching and listening to Harvey.

**“It’s working, Jesus,”** she said to the man with the beard.

**“Indeed it is,”** he remarked. **“The eye of his heart is beginning to open wider, wider than his tunnel vision of the past 42 years.”**

**“Neat trick, the obituary thing,”** she remarked.  
**“What made you think of that?”**

“Hmmm! Old seminary word that they teach: HERMENEUTICS. In the world humans experience with just their five senses, they tend to see what they are looking for. If they were raised to believe that God and We are distant and think that they are not good enough, they will read their Bibles as saying God is looking for flaws, that God is never satisfied by anything less than perfect, and hence not even as loving as their earthly parents. They will spend most of their lives feeling unworthy. And when they see their lives under constant scrutiny and judgment, they tend to judging everyone else, hoping to make themselves feel better by comparison.

So they either (a) try to make themselves acceptable to this “God apart,” OR, (b) a lot of them just give up the effort that never seems to be enough, and just write us off as eternally P.O.’d and not worth the trouble.

“BUT, when the eye of their heart is opened, they see that they are made in our image, that they are beloved and precious in our sight, and know that there’s nothing that they can ever do to separate themselves from our love. When they see and feel unconditional love they stop being judgmental of others. When that happens, they begin to explore the never-ending resource of HOPE, RICHES, and POWER available to them in that world of their five senses and in ours.

“When the eye of each of their hearts is opened, they can see how their FIVE SENSE WORLD and OUR WORLD are right side by side. What goes on in one is connected to the other.

“I wonder if Harvey will eventually open his Hearteye enough to see that *‘his’* book is sitting right here in my lap. All he has to do is to read it back into his Five Sense world.”

“OK, Jesus, you’re – uh – preaching to the choir!”

“Oh, sorry. It’s just that I’ve been trying from the get-go to get them to open their Hearteye and see that this Kingdom really is AT HAND – to have their Hearteye opened enough to see us right here with them in the very same room.

“I surely hope that Carson’s parents and his adopted family of Saint Marks won’t wait until he’s 42 years old to

**introduce him to what Harvey's just beginning to understand  
now."** [Carson is baby baptized in worship earlier today]

**"Yeah, Jesus, that would be a shame."**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.