

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day.
(Acts 17:11)

["Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes.
Contact Franklyn Pfeil—liftedup@lockportalliance.org—with questions or comments.]

"Cast your fate to the Wind"

Eddy weighs about as much as a thimbleful of air. The wind that forces you to hunch down can nearly pick Eddy up. To accommodate, Eddy's had to make a friend of the wind. They're often seen cavorting together. More than a few times at junior high cross-country races, people have mentioned that Eddy runs just like him.

We live in the middle of carefully cultivated fields. To the west, from where the wind prevails, is a half-mile stretch where there's no tree, no fence, not even a hedgerow to stand in the wind's way. There's a basketball backboard on that side which tips over no matter how many sandbags I pile on its standard. I've worn a pathway to my roof antenna, which turns on its mast no matter how hard I torque its clamps. I don't want to recall how many times I've had to climb up there at halftime of a Bills game to redirect it. Passing cars, spotting me wrestling with my over-sized antenna, will often honk. It's a fact that honks--by their length and their sharp or softened "edges"--can communicate alarm, or compassion, or anger, or empathy, or solidarity, or profanity, or victory, or bewilderment. But almost every horn I hear when I'm up there communicates its driver's twisted sense of humor. "Yeah, yeah. If you were a real man, you'd be home watching the game," I mutter in return.

On the windiest day of autumn, Eddy came sprinting inside. "If I get a big Bon-Ton bag and hold it out to the wind, do you think it would pick me up?" He has a vivid imagination. But his question was in earnest, and he expected an earnest reply.

"If the bag were big enough, and strong enough--yes, the wind could lift you. But a big Bon-Ton bag isn't gonna do it."

This scene might sound less than credible to you, but if you were to lift Eddy up, you'd swear he's made of papier-mache. So when I saw him, minutes later, in the back yard with about 5 of those big black plastic garbage bags, each inserted into the others, I was actually alarmed. He's persistent, and creative, and a little wacky...enough so that I felt compelled to get out there.

"Eddy!" I warned him, "if ever you are lifted by the wind, when your feet leave the ground, you are no longer able to control your direction. You're at the mercy of the wind. You could be carried to the road and dropped there."

'The Road' is the ogre of the homestead. Frankie's & Eddy's dog was injured just over a year ago when hit by a pickup truck on the road. It was a sickening, thudding hit, right in front of their eyes. In the dim morning light, the dog seemed to disappear into thin air. While I stood paralyzed by helplessness, Shelley sprinted for the phone to mobilize the prayer chain. Three hours and 300 prayers later, the dog trotted down the lane out of the back fields, head held high, showing little more than a scratch. I saw it, yet I can hardly believe it.

The road is a fear, and the beginning of wisdom. When they were just little, I used to tell them that a Tyrannosaurus Rex lived in the woods to the south of us. They don't believe the story about the T-Rex anymore, but The Road still holds its terror.

Eddy looked at his big plastic bags, then gazed out toward the road. He picked up the bags and walked inside the house.

Dad-and-Bible-teacher that I am, and sorry to see the adventure end this way, I seized the teachable moment, the moment we Dads were meant for--our chance to give them Jesus, not Peter Pan.

"If you want to fly, Eddy, take your Bible that Pastor Joe gave you. Breathe in its atmosphere until you want it like breath itself. Don't wait until you're big enough and smart enough. None of us is big enough or smart enough to handle that Word and that Power. We don't handle the Word of God. The Word of God handles us.

"Listen carefully, whether you understand or not: In the Bible, 'wind' and 'spirit' and 'breath' are the same word. In the beginning, God breathed His life into Adam:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (1).

"When you trust Jesus Christ to save your life, the breath--the Spirit--of God is given anew:
Then Jesus breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit (2).

"Breathe his breath, be one with Him. Let Him lift you. See where He takes you. You will be captive to grace, transported by grace, at the mercy of His means:

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit (3).

"What's grace, Dad?"

"Grace is what God gives to the undeserving. It's when God's big heart rises above good and bad, beyond cause and effect, in defiance of spiritual gravity. Grace isn't about us. It's not about me and it's not about you. Grace is about Jesus. It is inexplicable, inexhaustible, amazing, free, and paid for.

"God the Father gives it. God the Son paid for it with His every breath, and God the Holy Spirit teaches what it cost:

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last (4).

Grace means that a good wind--the Holy Spirit--will carry you."

"It means He won't drop me in the road."

"You understand more than you know."

Scripture cited: (1) Genesis 2:7; (2) John 20:22; (3) John 3:8; (4) Luke 23:46

It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —

"Approaching God: Lessons from the Inspired Prayers of Scripture" --Sunday at 9:45

"Jesus, the One and Only"--Sunday at 9:45

"Speak God's Word"--Sunday at 9:45

