Go Ahead: Wish Upon A Star

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"But I will hope continually, and will praise you yet more and more."

When we were kids, many of us learned that rhyme:

Star light, star bright, First star I see tonight,

I wish I may, I wish I might have the wish I wish tonight.

And of course, rarely did the things we wish for come to be, and if they did happen it wasn’t because we wished for them. But it made us feel better at the time; and if we were diligent, we kept working toward the wish of our hearts until the wish turned into something more ... we could see it taking shape in our minds and hearts, and that wish graduated to a full-blown hope.

Wishing and hoping are not the same. Hope is the confident expectation of God’s good. It is the firm belief that every blessing of God is already ours – it already exists through the grace of our loving God – and all we need to do is awaken to it, accept it, and claim it.

So hope is a wish with feet. We can first wish, but we then need to get into action. When I was in High School I was inspired by my music teacher. She was a teacher, a friend, and a mentor. I remember wishing that I could teach a choir the way she did.

At the time it was just a wish: a twinkle of an idea in my heart and mind; an unsubstantiated desire. When I graduated from high school and entered college, my wish became a hope as I pursued a degree in music. I put in the time and effort and my wish was bolstered by a solid plan, and ultimately a reality when I graduated with a degree in music and obtained a teaching job in Carson City.

When we shift our thoughts from a mere wish to hope, we create a welcome space in our spiritual environment for God's good. That good finds its place in our life in just the right form and at just the right time.

It is my belief that as a spiritual being, we are innately filled with hope – with the expectation that good is coming our way. Why? Because we are a Child of God; we are deserving of it, and God says the plans that He has for us are good. So there are lots of reasons to be hope-filled.

If we are living a life without hope, it is not a bad thing; it just means something needs to change – our attitude, our beliefs, our thoughts, our actions, our plan, our emotional or physical environment … something is unbalanced and needs attention.

Worry is not a bad thing; it means that our highly creative intelligence and empathy have found an area that needs attention; we have found a challenge - an opportunity for growth and change.

Worry and hopelessness used as a catalyst for change is healthy. But when used to avoid challenges these conditions can be detrimental to our mental and physical health. Excessive worrying and uncontrolled hopelessness can damage our immune systems.

We cannot avoid challenges, difficulties, and problems; but how do we frame our challenges? We can face a challenge and say, “This is going to be interesting. I’m going to learn something here.” Or we can face a challenge and say, “This is awful; the worst day ever.”

In response to a challenge, many of us are wishing for something. Some of us are wishing that we didn’t have to go through this ordeal at all. Others are wishing, “I wish I had the strength and skills to get through this.”

Conversely, I think there is an unproductive side of being too blindly and excessively positive. At these times we refuse to face our challenges and cover them with positive banalities. Excessive positivity would have us believe that there is no room for improvement. We ignore God’s Divine Discontent tapping on our hearts, urging us in one direction or another. The Truth is that it is fine just the way it is, yet Spirit is drawing us toward progress that we disregard because of fear or stubbornness. So we hide behind a positive pretense.

If we can identify our worry and hopelessness, greet them with non-judgment, and wish that a solution presents itself, then we are beginning the move toward creating the lives we are meant to live.

To ‘wish upon a star’ spiritually means something different than the common colloquial meaning of just making a wish. In the Bible, a ‘star’ represents knowledge and feelings beyond our earthly existence. The star symbolizes our awareness of God’s presence and impact on our lives. An old proverb says, “It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.” To ‘wish upon a star’ is to “light a candle”; to have the desire to obtain some noble goal that lies outside our self-centered, ego-motivated, human nature.

When we wish upon a star in the best sense, we are allowing the Christ to germinate an idea within us. From this germ grows an idea, desire, dream, and goal. As our wish is embolden by action it becomes a hope, fueled by Faith and the confidence that it is part of God’s good for us.

Three things can help our wishes grow into hope: gratitude, self-compassion, and passion. When we are grateful for the slightest of wishes, we create space in our hearts for abundance. Gratitude is the “Great Opener”. When we are grateful for what we have, we create the environment for more. When we are thankful for the people in our lives, our spouses, our loved ones, our friends, companions, and associates – we receive more. When we are appreciative for our struggles and trials, we open our souls to wisdom and peace. Through gratitude we see past the worries and hopelessness and see the light of joy and love.

The second is self-compassion. One of our greatest weapons against the dark side of human nature is to remember that we are all in the process of living; none of us have successfully completed our mission. If we had, we’d be gone; we wouldn’t have a body any more.

So we are still managing and muddling our way through life; doing the best we can, the best we know. If we knew better, we’d do better. So we keep learning; listening to Spirit, trying to discern the lessons from every difficult situation and person. We forgive ourselves for the messes we create on our journey: for the misspoken words, and thoughtless hurtful acts. We are not fully evolved as an individual or a species, so we show compassion on ourselves and others.

As we are kind to ourselves, which for many is not that easy, we more quickly recover from a failed attempt. It helps us reframe our challenges from ‘worst day ever’ into, “This is going to be interesting.”

When we can hug our selves mentally and emotionally when we blunder we are actually showing gratitude to ourselves for ourselves. Through self-compassion we stop judging ourselves and berating ourselves and allow ourselves the room to grow. The more self-compassion we practice and develop, the more compassion we can bestow upon others.

The last point is passion. Many times our hope is derived from the things that we love; the things that we are passionate about. My high school wish developed into hope through my passion for music. When we invest passion into our hopes, dreams, and wishes, other interests may spring forth. My love of music moved me toward teaching, which led me to directing community choirs, which led me to taking a job as a church music director, which led me to the ministry, which led to embracing more of my love for writing and helping others. One passion led to another.

We don’t have to make a living with our passion; we are just happier and more hopeful when we embrace what we love. What we love is really an expression of who we are and why we are here; it is our uniqueness as a Child of God expressing through the Christ and into Creation.

Pay attention to your wishes; the most important ones will grow feet, or flippers, or wings. Those wishes when fed by gratitude, self-compassion, and passion just might develop into full-on hopes, expectations, and certainties.

It is my prayer that the Christ continues to shine upon your hearts and lives; that you will be open to the Light of God in all areas of your life. I pray that the star of God, the angel-thoughts that come to you in quiet times, illuminate your way.

So, yeah … go ahead and wish upon that star.

Let us pray….