

Sarah Kretzmann  
April 9, 2014

We conclude our six weeks of Wednesday meditation on Isaiah 43.19.... “See, I am doing a new thing, says the Lord, now it springs forth...do you not perceive it?”

We have spent six weeks considering new things, new beginnings, new growth.

Tonight we consider *perception*.

To *perceive*...in other words, to *notice*...

*Look, I am doing something new, says the Lord, haven't you noticed?*

All sorts of things can grow without our noticing. Cancer can grow inside of our bodies without our noticing. Cavities can grow in our teeth without our noticing. Even our age can grow without our noticing until we realize songs that are still hits to us are played on the oldies stations. Sometimes, things grow that are scary and startling, without our even noticing.

But sometimes, beautiful things can grow without our noticing, as well. Our elementary school had its spring program this week, and I noticed some amazing things...if you attended, perhaps you noticed them, too.

I noticed the belly of one of our beloved teachers, who is expecting a baby this summer...how her tummy has grown, I thought, and I hadn't really noticed until last night.

I noticed our children are growing up, and you don't really notice this until you see them on risers or on stage...they are growing taller, their hair is growing longer,

some of their voices are growing deeper...they are growing up, even without our noticing...I noticed my first baptism standing with his class, singing...these boys have grown into young men, and I hadn't even really noticed...have you?

And then the concert let out and all the families walked to their cars, and it was different than when the Christmas program lets out and everybody makes a dash to their cars, chins tucked deep into scarves because of the shocking cold. No, the air has grown warmer...there is a whisper of spring in the wind...have you noticed? As they walked, they chatted and laughed and lingered.

Things grow and change, and sometimes we notice and sometimes we don't.

But whether we notice it or not, God is always at work, creating something new. I am glad God is not limited by my perception. I am glad God is not so vain or shallow so as to only create something new when I happen to be looking, like some attention-starved child doing a handstand, yelling, "Look at me! Look at me!" No, God is quieter than that. God is steadier than that. God's ongoing creation is much more persistent, growing and growing, whether we notice or not.

And what a shame not to notice. What a shame not to perceive. What a shame to be oblivious to what God is creating right under our very noses.

We focus on the messes we have created—like the mess in the Ukraine, Fort Hood, the White House...and we fail to notice the good things that God is placing before us, like the racket of kids practicing baseball outside, like the sound of chirping birds

returning to our trees (they have been gone for so long!), like the displays in stores of shovels and spades and packets of seeds for our gardens...

God is faithfully creating each day, one right after the other...and we are so bad at noticing the potential joy in that! But we must somehow look past the drudgery, the fatigue, the frustration, or else it will bury us. God calls us—*begs* us—to look up and notice what he's doing...but he doesn't force us.

Look up and notice your children, growing into the next generation of world leaders.

Look up and notice the skies are changing from winter to spring.

Look up and notice tiny shoots and tiny leaves and the hint of things turning green.

Look up and notice the one who climbs up on the cross, and look up and notice that he dies for you, and for me, in order to give us exuberant life beyond this dreadful one...and though he does not demand our attention, he surely deserves it. The last words my uncle scribbled on a piece of paper before he died two years ago were, “Pay attention.” Life abounds, all around. Are we noticing?