

Wendy's December Prayer Thoughts

One September as the early sun shone through the bedroom window, I could not take my eyes off the ceiling. A house spider had begun to spin its web. A line was made. It stopped, then moved again at speed still spinning. I was intrigued to learn how it was constructing its almost invisible cobweb. First let us look at the arachnid itself...There are 3,000 species in the world, and spiders have been on earth for 3 million years... Cave dwellers have no eyes, others with 8, 6, or 4 have poor sight, but they can detect movement and light levels. Wong Carissa in a New Science Magazine stated that spiders can see as well as pigeons, cats and elephants. They have 8 legs and the body is in 2 parts - the head and the abdomen. The abdomen contains the heart and respiratory organs, also the spinnerets, the 6 types of gland which enable the spider to make silk to produce a strong thread for spinning its web.

This spider was suspended from the ceiling, so I could only imagine it had used sticky thread to stretch the 1st thread between 2 posts. It must then turn back half way along the thread when it produced a third thread to spread the web downwards. Spokes are added running from the centre to make the basic design. Work is then concentrated on the centre, making sticky concentric circles, but leaving some free so that it can move along them. The last thread is pulled tight and acts as the signal thread, which begins to vibrate to signal that an insect has flown into it, and is trapped. The unfortunate insect struggles while the spider rushes to wrap the bug in silk. The spider's guts are too narrow to take solids, so it bites its prey injecting juices, sucks out the liquid parts, and leaves the solids/husks. It is estimated that 25 tons of spiders kill 400-800 million tons of prey each year.

I love to go into the garden on a frosty morning, and see on the grass, hedges and bushes, the dozens of cobwebs glistening as the wintry sun beams on them. It is almost unbelievable to think of the spiders delicately spun threads are similar in lightness and strength to nylon, yet of greater elasticity. There is a traditional story about a Christmas spider from the late 1800's still told today in Ukraine, Poland and Germany. It may be the origin of tinsel decorating our Christmas trees. A poor widow lived in a hut with her two children. One Christmas Eve they had a tree, but had no money to buy anything to hang on it. The children went to bed feeling sad and tired. The next morning when they awoke, they saw the tree covered in webs. As they opened the windows the first rays of sunlight shone onto the webs and turned them into silver and gold. They were overjoyed and never lived in poverty again. Ukrainians and others make spider ornaments to hang on their trees. A basic one is of a walnut for the body and wire for the legs, but many are made of sparkling beads. The spider is seen as a protector, not something to fear.

We have a much quoted saying, "Oh what a tangled web we weave." It was coined by Sir Walter Scott in his poem Marmion - A Tale of Flodden Field. Lord Marmion, hailed for bravery, stooped to deceit. He had persuaded a nun, Constance de Beverley, to leave her convent for him. Then he turned his affection to Clara de Clerc, a wealthy heiress who was engaged to Sir Ralph de Wilton. Marmion deviously and selfishly forged documents accusing him of treason, hence the saying: "O what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive,"

.... A spider's web is a beauty to behold, but it is also a sticky deadly trap, much like the trap of lying. The first lie we spin may be tiny, almost invisible, but soon we have to spin another to cover the first, and so it continues. We find ourselves stuck in a tangle of deceit. It's then we need to ask God for strength to be honest, to own up and tell the truth. Before we do, let us quietly meditate on the wise words of Proverbs 12:22. "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth"

Let it speak in depth from the Message Translation. "God can't stomach lies; but he loves the company of those who keep their word." Then the Contemporary English Version: "The Lord hates every liar, but He is a friend of all who can be trusted." It's only in telling the truth that keeps us out of a sticky situation, and keeps us open to God and others. Acknowledging this, let us determine to be open before God in our prayer.

1. Thank God that He is a God of truth. Remind yourself of this by repeating words from Numbers 23:19. "God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should repent."

2. Next, be ready to confess and repent so that you may be restored in fellowship with the Triune God, who is Truth.

What lies have you told that have hurt others? When did you stretch the truth, or wilfully deceive? Lord, "Give me back the joy that comes when you save me.

Keep me strong by giving me a willing spirit." Psalm 51:12 ICB

3. Commit to Truth. Holy Spirit fill me with a spirit of truth, so keep me from dishonesty, and from the lies of the devil.

Celebrate Christmas knowing, "The Word (Jesus) became a human being and lived here with us. We saw His glory, the glory of the Son of the Father. From him the complete gifts of grace and truth have come down to us." John 1:14 CEV