

Lessons from a Glacier
(Cathy Wilkes)

*“O God, my soul thirsts for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water
(Psalm 63:1)*

Recently, we were able to enjoy a cruise to Alaska. We made our way to Glacier Bay National Park, a highlight of Alaska’s Inside Passage and part of a 25-million acre World Heritage Site. The water was like glass and the air silent, except for the call of the many seabirds.

At the ship’s bow we found a prime vantage point to view majestic glaciers. There was a quiet stillness amongst us as we remained awestruck by the magnificent vista before us. I learned we were observing two types of glaciers. One was a gently curving river of ice making its way down between the mountains, gradually diminishing near the water’s edge. This, I learned, was actually an unhealthy, dying glacier.

The second type also lay between mountain peaks, but at the sea it presented a massive wall of ice tinged blue and green. It was impressive, but throughout the visit it dropped many huge chunks of icebergs into the water, causing great booms. This action, called breaching, though seemingly destroying the glacier, causing it to appear to recede, is actually a sign of good health.

Why? At its source, high in the mountains, a great amount of snow is falling. The force of the weight of snow causes it to constantly move toward the sea, but there is no concern as long as the heavy snow continues to fall in the mountains. In order to remain healthy, the glacier must be constantly fed snow at its source, its heart.

What a wonderful reminder for me, as I stood pondering the beauty, a small seemingly insignificant human on a grand ship, a tiny dot in a huge bay surrounded by even more majestic mountains and glaciers.

I found myself with a spiritual longing for more than this world has to offer. I am healthy, alive and well only when I am constantly being fed at my source — the heart of me. Then I am able to give generously of myself to others in my path, but never run out of supply because my source is abundantly replenished.

Jesus tells me, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink; whoever believes in me ... streams of living water will flow from within,” (John 7:37, 38). He is the one who is able to feed me with truth and empower me with His strength, to do what feels impossible to me. In order to bear good fruit in my life, I must remain attached to Him in body, mind and spirit, so that I can, not only be of benefit to others but I can be constantly refilled from the life-giver.

*“I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream; my thirst was quenched,
my soul revived, and now I live in Him.” — H. Bonar*