



Let All Things Now Living

As a young boy, the animated story of the fictional character Pinocchio fascinated me. As the story is told, a puppet is carved from a piece of pine by a woodcarver, Geppetto in a small Italian village. His puppet adventures really begin when dreams about being a real boy become a reality and Pinocchio is brought to life by a blue fairy. As a young boy myself, I was intrigued to see all the troubles and excitements in which this transformed puppet would find himself. Where he was once bound to his limitations as a form made of wood, becoming alive led him into some interesting excursions.

In many ways, this fictional plot represents the new life of the Christian. Once dead in our sins, much like a puppet that is subject to the limitations and pull of attached strings, we have come to know liberating life through Christ. He has loosed the strings of sin and he has breathed new life into each of us. The announcement of our freedom is given in Galatians 5:1: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." At the call for "All things now living" every believer can give a response. We are the living, made alive in Christ! Pinocchio's ecstatic claim, "I'm a *real* boy!" is the anthem of thanksgiving I can give to God, the Creator for giving me life.

The picture that Katherine K. Davis paints of new life given back in thanksgiving and praise to its Creator is not that which unfolds in this fictional story. For Pinocchio, life and freedom causes him to depart from his maker, only to find the harsh reality of living life on his own. No longer under the care and provision of his creator, he finds himself in greater and greater predicaments, even at one time being swallowed by a whale. (Oddly, the story sounds much like the outcome of the rebellious prophet, Jonah). Eventually, Pinocchio longs to find home and to be reunited with his creator whom he now knows as father, Geppetto.

Those who are made alive in Christ are called to live life in thanksgiving. In fact, that we live in thanksgiving and praise proves we have truly received our freedom. When this kind of appropriation is made, our journey can be described as "[traveling] forward...from light into light." True life itself is found when we remain close to our Creator. This is one of the paradoxes of the faith. Philip Brooks said, "No man in this world attains to freedom from any slavery except by entrance into some higher servitude. There is no such thing as an entirely free man." The mystery is that we find true life to the extent that we bind ourselves to God. Therefore, Paul's acknowledgment of our freedom in Galatians chapter 5 comes with a disclaimer: "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature" 5:13 (TNIV). New life responds in service to the Life Giver.

As God is the one who formed us, he knows the path that is laid before us. We need his wisdom and care for the journey. When we live in his light, we find that "shadows have vanished and darkness is banished." We take an example from every created thing in our universe. The sun, trees, mountains, and fountains all respond in continuous praise and thanksgiving by being that which God created them to be. This kind of response characterizes the new life we have been given; not as puppets on strings, but as free creatures turned in praise and thanksgiving to our Creator. Let all things now living, sing to our Maker in both words and life!

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