



The God Who Reveals – His Plan is Far Better Than Our Own

Bamboo

Once upon a time, in the heart of an ancient Kingdom, there was a beautiful garden. And there, in the cool of the day, the Master of the garden would walk. Of all the plants of the garden, the most beautiful and most beloved was the gracious and noble bamboo. Year after year, bamboo grew yet more noble and gracious, conscious of his Master's love and watchful delight, but modest and gentle withal. And often when the wind came to revel in the garden, Bamboo would dance and play, tossing and swaying and leaping and bowing in joyous abandon, leading the Great Dance of the garden, which most delighted the Master's heart.

Now, once upon a day, the Master himself drew near to contemplate his Bamboo with eyes of curious expectancy. And Bamboo, in a passion of adoration, bowed his great head to the ground in loving greeting.

The Master spoke: "Bamboo, Bamboo, I would use you." Bamboo flung his head to the sky in utter delight. The day of days had come, the day for which he had completion and his destiny. His voice came low: "Master, I'm ready. Use me as you wish." "Bamboo," the Master's voice was grave "I would have to take you and cut you down!" A trembling of great horror shook Bamboo... "Cut ... me... down? Me...whom you, Master, has made the most beautiful in all thy Garden... cut me down! Ah, not that. Not that. Use me for the joy, use me for the glory, oh master, but do not cut me down!" "Beloved Bamboo," the Master's voice grew graver still "If I do not cut you down, I cannot use you." The garden grew still. Wind held his breath. Bamboo slowly bent his proud and glorious head. There was a whisper: "Master, if you cannot use me other than to cut me down... then do your will and cut." "Bamboo, beloved Bamboo, I would cut your leaves and branches from you also." "Master, spare me. Cut me down and lay my beauty in the dust; but would you also have to take from me my leaves and branches too?" "Bamboo, if I do not cut them away, I cannot use you." The Sun hid his face. A listening butterfly glided fearfully away. And Bamboo shivered in terrible expectancy, whispering low: "Master, cut away." "Bamboo, Bamboo, I would yet... split you in two and cut out your heart, for if I cut not so, I cannot use you."

Then Bamboo bowed to the ground: "Master, Master... then cut and split." So did the Master of the garden took Bamboo... and cut him down... and hacked off his branches... and stripped off his leaves... and split him in two... and cut out his heart.

And lifting him gently, the Master carried Bamboo to where there was a spring of fresh sparkling water in the midst of his dry fields. Then putting one end of the broken Bamboo in the spring

and the other end into the water channel in the field, the Master gently laid down his beloved Bamboo...And the spring sang welcome, and the clear sparkling waters raced joyously down the channel of bamboo's torn body into the waiting fields. Then the rice was planted, and the days went by, and the shoots grew and the harvest came.

In the day Bamboo, once so glorious in his stately beauty, was yet more glorious in his brokenness and humility. For in his beauty he was life abundant, but in his brokenness he became a channel of abundant life to his Master's world.

Source: ozsermonillustrations.com

Sometimes it is difficult to see our purpose in life. When we listen and obey God's commands, His will is revealed. His plan for our lives may be bigger than the plans we have for ourselves. God can use ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things for Him. The rewards of obedience are sometimes delayed, but they are guaranteed by God.

Scripture

Read Esther 4:1-17

Discovery Questions

1. When we serve God we often risk our own comfort and security. What was Esther risking? Why was she risking this?
2. Re-read verse 14. In your own words, paraphrase the last sentence in this verse. What does this mean to you?
3. What did Esther instruct Mordecai to do? (v. 16)

4. Can you recall a time in which you were faced with a difficult situation and had to be courageous? How did you prepare for this? In what ways did God guide and protect you?

Journaling

Which verse spoke most powerfully to me? Why?

Prayer: Spend some time in prayer conversing with your God. Use the following ideas as a potential guide to your prayer time.

- Dear Lord, help me to understand that You have placed me into this particular life and circumstance for a purpose. Reveal Yourself to me.
- God, help me to trust You and seek Your direction when faced with challenges. I need Your wisdom and protection.
- Dear Jesus, allow me to surrender myself completely to Your will. I want to be used by You.
- Heavenly Father, thank you for having a perfect plan for my life. It's far better than my own. Thank you for giving me a reason to obey.