**THE APPLE OF MY EYE**

***Idioms With Spiritual Applications (#3)***

When I try to do a household project like plumbing, my wife will say, “you are in over your head.” I don’t have to look up to know what she means. I simply call the plumber. When my young children told Benita what I had bought for her birthday they had “let the cat out of the bag.” In that case I did not call animal control, I just sighed. The English language has special sayings that to a foreigner would make no sense. To the locals of that region the saying makes perfect sense.

For example, I grew up in the south (let us all sing “rocky top Tennessee”). You Yankees here in the north need a translator when you go to the Dixie side of the Mason-Dixon line. There, when you are trying to be nice when talking about someone with a serious flaw, you begin by saying, “Bless her heart, she is so naïve.” Just use “Bless their heart” when you speak about someone’s deficiencies and you’re all good. When you meet the girl of your dreams you exclaim, “she’s pretty as a peach.” I can’t tell you how many times as a kid I messed up and made mama “madder than a wet hen.” When I actually made a B on my report card I knew I was “livin’ in high cotton.” When a hillbilly was missing several of his teeth we would say, “Bubba could eat corn through a picket fence.” Or if something was not just right we would say, “that thar thang is cattywampus.” It took a doohickey and whatchamacallit to fix it too. Southerners knew what that meant.

When I moved north of the Mason-Dixon to the frozen tundra of Minnesota I had to learn a whole new language. I thought I was in Greece when I heard phrases like “Uffda” and “Yah, ya betcha, don’tchaknow.” Someone would say on their way to a restaurant, “hey, come go with.” Who ends a sentence with a preposition? And where I grew up eating casseroles, now I had to learn to eat a “hotdish” (for you suthn’ers that means that pan of food is made of leftovers, tater tots and tons of cheese). And don’t get me started on “Minnesota goodbyes.” It takes two hours or more to actually see your company get in the car and leave your driveway. But, I must be patient and show them “Minnesota Nice,” a phrase that means something like, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Whether you are from Minnesota or Tennessee, our language has been influenced by the King James Bible. It was first translated into English in 1611. That makes it 510 years old. The impact that grand old Bible has had on the English speaking world is profound. Some of the Bible’s idioms from that ancient world have been adopted into our language today. Let me illustrate:

Have you ever said, “Allow me to catch my breath.” If so, read Job 9:18 in which the suffering Job said, “*He will not allow me to catch my breath, But fills me with bitterness.”* One event after another had hit this righteous man that he didn’t even have time to breathe.

Have you ever heard someone say, “He’s so rich that a thousand dollars is just ‘a drop in the bucket’ to him?” Isaiah 40:15 says, “*Surely the nations are like a drop in the bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales*…” God looks at the world through a different lens than we do. China and India are huge to us with a third of the world’s population in just those two nations. God, who created billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars, sees them as but a very small thing, a drop in the bucket.

When we “*extend an olive branch*” to offer mercy or help to others we get that phrase from Genesis 8:11. When we see “*the handwriting on the wall*” we see what Darius saw in Daniel 5:5-6. When we “*take someone under your wing*” we protect them like God did many times with His people (Psalm 17:8; 61:4 and 91:4). There are many other idioms like that from the Bible which have filtered into our language today. But there is one special one that means so much to me. Can I share it with you?

Read Deuteronomy 32:10   
“*He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye*.

Read Psalm 17:8   
“*Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings*.”

Read Zechariah 2:8   
“*For thus says the LORD of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye*.”

The “*apple*” of the eye was a reference to the pupil or center of the eye. It was considered the most sensitive part of the body and should be protected at all cost. You can lose an arm or leg and still function, but to lose your eyesight was truly devastating. When others picked on Israel (Zech. 2:8), God’s special people, or if they fought with David (Psa. 17:8), a man after God’s heart, then it was if they were attacking God Himself. When God found Israel all alone out in the wilderness (Deut. 32:10) He bent down and tenderly embraced them as if they were a baby left in a basket out on the water (i.e. Moses surely related to that tender loving image).

I cannot imagine a more beautiful description of God’s love for me than to be called “*the apple of my eye*,” for that is how I think of my own children and grandchildren. Other people in my life are near and dear to me, but there is something extra special about those for whom you would give your life without hesitation.

*“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends”* (John 15:13). Jesus proved how much He loved me when He did indeed lay down His life for me. God so loved me that He gave His only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16). I can think of nothing more magnificent than these words: “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God*” (Matt. 5:9).

Our heavenly Father pours out His loving blessings upon us so fast and furious that He doesn’t “allow me to catch my breath.” He has taken us “under the shadow of His wing” and called us “the apple of My eye.”

Dear friends, we are special to God. Rejoice! - Rick