



I knew in the sixth grade that science was by far my least favorite subject in school. By then, I realized photosynthesis and kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, species; and the scientific method were all the absolute bane of my junior high existence. High school wasn't much better with biology and chemistry and physics. However, it just so happens that the closest I have ever gotten to experiencing what the magi, astrologers, wise men, astronomers: whatever you want to

call them; for what they went through long ago, the closest I ever got was Astronomy 101 in college. I will be the first to admit that I only signed up for it because it was supposed to be an easy A, as higher up administrators insisted on these complete nonsense general education requirements. That we late teens and early twenty-somethings should broaden our horizons about all that goes on in the world, and even the sky. And that, evidently, if we had some basic knowledge in other aspects of the day-to-day human operation, maybe we would have a little added respect to more of humanity. Regardless, it was supposed to be an easy A for a guy who was much more interested in the social science end of things. I figured we would just map out a few star formations, and hopefully, at most, only a few physics equations here and there, and it would all turn out just fine.

And then walked in Dr. Voytas. He was this tall, lanky guy, with a long blond ponytail. But he also seemed to always wear socks with sandals, that was supposed to be a catastrophic no-no for all the college students, at least, at the time. Regardless, Dr. Voytas, appearing as if he just emerged out of a 1970s rock band, walked in front of the lecture hall as if he didn't have a single care in the world. He knew he was about to teach the overwhelming majority of the class roster who were only there for the dreaded gen. ed. requirement, and perhaps an easier path to a decent grade. But on he went anyway, to share with us about the most breath-taking lights in the sky.

It turned out his specialty was sub-atomic physics, whatever that meant: it was just another reminder that he was in a different stratosphere of interest from me; at least, so I thought. Towards the end of the semester, I remember being in the university chapel for some larger-scale worship on a winter evening. And, out of nowhere, walking down the side aisle, was this tall lanky guy with a blond ponytail, in his socks with sandals, seemingly emerging out of some backstage of a rock band concert, taking his seat amidst the rest of us who were longing to be reassured an even greater light than those in the sky. There he sat, seemingly a genius in a different world of physics: someone who could be so easily stereotyped to be completely out of place there, not just on looks, but on his resume; that he would have no interest whatsoever in a light of Christ that couldn't be placed into equations or celestial formations. But there he was: a guy who could spend all hours of a day diving into the most mind-numbing material I could ever imagine; that the light of a child, a prophet, a messiah, a divine love in the flesh, could captivate him just as much as anything else in his human field of expertise.

Oftentimes with Epiphany, we marvel over the physical distance that the Gospel can reach all the way to a caravan of magi willing to travel I can't even begin to imagine to catch but a glimpse of that love. But I wonder if this sometimes overlooked day in the life of the church calls us to remember a different reach of this boundless light of Christ. As if our Lord is willing to reach and empower and walk alongside with not just the social science appreciators: the theologians and the church administrators and the charitable non-for-profit workers, but for the people who are captivated by the biology and the chemistry and the physics of it all: as if they might just have a rather deep understanding of a different transcendent beauty in the most wondrous inner-workings of this life. As if there could possibly be just as much light in them as anyone else.

Part of our semester courseload was a few stops to the campus observatory, where we looked into this massive telescope of things to have a more intimate look at some of the most breathtaking lights in the sky, some seemingly so old to be beyond understanding and way too physically far beyond our

mental reach. But the kind of light where you cannot help but stare and believe that there might still be some beauty in this world, after all. Nevertheless, I'll still remember the night when God nearly took my breath away: when a physics professor and seemingly rock band alum, could be just as reeled in by an even more mind-boggling light that cannot be quantified, cannot be fully explained: that led a caravan of magi to travel God only knows how long to catch a glimpse of a love that might just save the world. A love that did, and still is, and is just as much for the ones in subatomic physics as the people who study Scripture day and night and still cannot figure out how this grace insists on being alive and well in Jesus Christ for us all to enjoy. For that greatest news for all of us wanderers on this journey of faith, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!