

**WRITING OUR RÉSUMÉS**  
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It might be an odd thing for me to think about when I'm 6 weeks from retiring,  
but what if I had to go out and find a totally different job right now?

I haven't looked for a job in years.

My qualifications are pretty specific to being a pastor.

What would I put on my résumé in order to get some other job?

Any good job counselor would tell me not to write my résumé before I'd first looked at job postings.

Then, I'd list my qualifications in a way that the potential employer  
could see how they fit in with their needs.

People can get pretty creative doing this. A Facebook post gave this challenge:

*On a resume, how would you describe how you changed a light bulb?*

The winning answer: *Single-handedly managed the successful upgrade and deployment  
of new environmental illumination system with zero cost overruns and zero safety incidents.*

Another amusing Facebook feature is a series of memes about job hunting.  
(memes are just pictures with funny captions)

This meme showed a fox running with the hounds; the caption read:

*When you lie on your resume but get the job anyway.*

This funny insight points to an uncomfortable truth:

We come into this world as damp, squalling bundles of neediness,  
useful to no one, utterly dependent,  
and are expected, day after day, to figure everything out,  
to make our way in the world, and become productive citizens.  
The problem? we often don't have the faintest clue what we're doing.  
We do what we have to do to get along in this world –  
even if it means lying on our resume.



Of course it's necessary to become a functioning adult,

but I think the world would be a far better place if we never, ever forgot  
that our humble beginnings are all the same, whether prince or pauper:

Not one of us never entirely grows out of being a damp, squalling bundle of neediness  
that doesn't have a clue.

I bet this thought is pretty offensive to some folks.

To be described as needy, not having it all together, is a terrible insult.

So let me also acknowledge that every one has amazing gifts,  
and some have astonishingly impressive skills.

I gladly affirm the wonderfulness of all that  
and encourage everyone to have confidence in their gifts and skills.

These are given to us by God for the very purpose  
of glorifying God by serving our neighbors well.

The trouble comes when we forget that we are all born the same,  
and start assessing the value of the other person for the purpose  
of cataloging the ways that we are better and more worthy than they are.

We slyly but clearly labeling others as weeds – and we're always wheat.

The basic problem with this endeavor is that the position of judging folks is not vacant.

No human being besides the Son of God will ever be interviewed for this job.

Even if we were so boldly self-confident as to put in our résumé for the job,  
anything we would say about our qualifications would be a lie.

We are not qualified. We do not know what God knows.

We cannot see what God sees. We certainly don't love as God loves.  
Our best minds, our astonishing talents, and our greatest accomplishments  
are kindergarten creations compared with the handiwork of God  
in the petals of a lone wildflower that will see only one sunrise.

Until we can do what God does, create what God creates,  
we'd better not apply for the job of judging any of the bits and parts of God's creation.

And, spoiler alert: we'll never be able to do what God does.

There's a great story about this. It isn't factual, but it is true.

Some scientists were marveling at all the things humanity had figured out:

The miracles of modern medicine that save millions of lives;  
supercolliders that uncover the secrets of the atoms;

telescopes that peer to the very edges of the universe.

Researchers had even begun to create living entities,  
some in the form of machines with fantastic artificial intelligence,  
and others had created living cells in laboratories.

The scientists were pretty proud of all this,

and one asserted that now humanity didn't need a Creator any more,  
because we were now just as good at creating as God is.

One of the scientists offered to go tell God that God's services weren't required any more.

They all agreed that God's interference in things needed to stop,  
especially because all those benighted religious nuts kept blocking progress.

So one went to see God and told God all that humanity had done,  
even to the point of creating life itself, just like God,

so humanity had this, and would just take it from here, thank you very much.

God allowed as how all this was indeed very impressive.

Could the scientist please give a demonstration of creating a living being?

"Certainly!" said the scientist. "I'll be right back. I need to go get some dirt."

"Uh uh uh!" said God. "Make your own dirt."

We can be wonderful, creative, and even majestic beings,

but compared to the Lord of heavenly forces, to the rock of our being,

to the Savior who meets us in the deepest of pits and who is already in all our tomorrows,

we are damp, squalling bundles of neediness who can't create our own dirt,

who don't know wheats from weeds, and yet who are chronically overconfident enough

that we are altogether too ready to lie on our résumé to get the job of judging each other.

We need to admit that not one of us can see past this very moment,

but that God can, and it is God who has given us a vision of the ultimate tomorrow

when all will be healed and whole

We live in the hope of God's promise that Creation will one day be fully itself, and so will we.

Everything and every one healed and whole, as they were created to be in the first place.

That wholeness of Creation will be utterly perfect

because there will no longer be an enemy to sow the evil seeds of selfishness:

the sins of divisiveness, oppression, greed, and hard-heartedness.

Who is that enemy that will be banished?

Call it the devil if you like, but we all know that Pogo was right:

*Yep, Son, we have met the enemy and he is us.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pogo\\_\(comic\\_strip\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pogo_(comic_strip))

How will God vanquish this enemy?

The psalmist gives us the first clue in the prayer: *knit my heart to you that I may fear your Name.*

When our hearts are fully one with God's, then, Paul says, God's glory is also ours,  
a glory revealed for us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Remember that it is while we were still sinners that Jesus came to heal us,  
not when we had it all figured out and had healed ourselves.

God's healing is still going on, and the last step – also one that only God can do –  
is to take all the evil wherever it lies in Creation, on the Earth,  
and in our human hearts, and destroy it so utterly it cannot ever return.

What about those people Jesus said would be weeping and grinding their teeth?

That's a pretty frightening threat, right?

"Those people" will, I believe, be every single one of us  
when, in the process of being made healed and whole,  
we have our weeds gathered and eternally banished from our lives.

One of my favorite theologians, C.S. Lewis, says that in the process of that banishing  
we will each come face to face with our weeds, with the evil that we harbored in our lives,  
including our selfishness, the myriad times we lied on our résumés  
by holding ourselves out as being qualified to judge our neighbors.

If we want to keep our time of weeping and grinding our teeth to a minimum,  
then we need to remember our beginnings, and how we and everyone else on this planet  
are damp, squalling bundles of neediness BUT we also need to remember our hope:  
that each and every one of these bundles, every single one, is a beloved child of God  
and destined for the glory of our brother, Blessèd Jesus,  
the Word made flesh who dwells among us still, full of grace and truth.

The gracious Spirit of the Lord works all good within us, not because we deserve it,  
but because that's what God does with us damp, squalling bundles,  
each and every one of us made from the same precious dirt by our Creating God.

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#### **COLLECT OF THE DAY:**

O God, you direct our lives by your grace, and your words of justice and mercy reshape the world. Mold us into a people who welcome your word and serve one another, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

#### **ISAIAH 44:6-8**

The Lord, Israel's king and redeemer, the Lord of heavenly forces, says: I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there are no gods. Who is like me? Let them speak up, explain it, and lay it out for me. Who announced long ago what is to be? Let them tell us what is to come. Don't tremble; have no fear! Didn't I proclaim it? Didn't I inform you long ago? You are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no other rock; I know of none.

#### **PSALM 86:11-17**

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth;

knit my heart to you that I may fear your Name.

**I will thank you, O LORD my God, with all my heart, and glorify your Name for evermore.**

For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the nethermost Pit.

**The arrogant rise up against me, O God, and a band of violent men seeks my life;  
they have not set you before their eyes.**

But you, O LORD, are gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.

**Turn to me and have mercy upon me; give your strength to your servant;  
and save the child of your handmaid.**

Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed;  
because you, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

**ROMANS 8:12-25**

So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn't an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons and daughters. You didn't receive a spirit of slavery to lead you back again into fear, but you received a Spirit that shows you are adopted as his children. With this Spirit, we cry, "Abba, Father." The same Spirit agrees with our spirit, that we are God's children. But if we are children, we are also heirs. We are God's heirs and fellow heirs with Christ, if we really suffer with him so that we can also be glorified with him.

I believe that the present suffering is nothing compared to the coming glory that is going to be revealed to us. The whole creation waits breathless with anticipation for the revelation of God's sons and daughters. Creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice—it was the choice of the one who subjected it—but in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from slavery to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of God's children. We know that the whole creation is groaning together and suffering labor pains up until now. And it's not only the creation. We ourselves who have the Spirit as the first crop of the harvest also groan inside as we wait to be adopted and for our bodies to be set free. We were saved in hope. If we see what we hope for, that isn't hope. Who hopes for what they already see? But if we hope for what we don't see, we wait for it with patience.

**MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43**

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like someone who planted good seed in his field. While people were sleeping, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and went away. When the stalks sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared.

"The servants of the landowner came and said to him, 'Master, didn't you plant good seed in your field? Then how is it that it has weeds?'

"An enemy has done this,' he answered.

"The servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them?' "

But the landowner said, 'No, because if you gather the weeds, you'll pull up the wheat along with them. Let both grow side by side until the harvest. And at harvesttime I'll say to the harvesters, "First gather the weeds and tie them together in bundles to be burned. But bring the wheat into my barn.'"

Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

Jesus replied, "The one who plants the good seed is the Human One. The field is the world. And the good seeds are the followers of the kingdom. But the weeds are the followers of the evil one. The enemy who planted them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the present age. The harvesters are the angels. Just as people gather weeds and burn them in the fire, so it will be at the end of the present age. The Human One will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that cause people to fall away and all people who sin. He will throw them into a burning furnace. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom. Those who have ears should hear."

**SERMON HYMN: *Blessed Jesus, At Thy Word***

**BLESSING:** God bless your eyes to see the world as God sees, your lips to speak to others as if to Christ, your hands and work and heal in the power of the Holy Spirit, your minds to discern what is excellent, admirable, true, holy, just, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise. Our Triune God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless your hearts and set them on fire.