

God, the Great Artist: Lessons from California

By: David Burruss

I recently had the chance to visit California, and let me just say, no picture, no video, no secondhand story could've prepared me for what I saw with my own eyes. From towering sequoia trees that made me feel like a tiny dot on God's canvas, to the peaceful, glistening waters of Monterey Bay, it was like walking through a masterpiece. The coastline along Highway 1 took my breath away. Around every curve was another view that made me stop and say, "Wow." Cliffs dropped into crashing waves, wildflowers lined the hills, and the sea stretched endlessly into the horizon. It was beauty that almost demanded you pull over and just sit with it for a while.

Standing beneath those ancient sequoias, some of them over 2,000 years old, I couldn't help but feel a little awestruck. These trees have stood through storms and droughts and centuries of change, yet there they are, still reaching for the sky. It reminded me of Isaiah 40:8, where it says, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever." Nature changes, people change, but God's truth doesn't. And sometimes, it takes a forest to remind us of that.

Now, before this trip, I'd heard plenty of stories about California. Maybe you've heard them too. That the people are rude, everyone's in a rush, and you'll leave with more stress than you came with. And yes, I'll admit, the driving can get a little wild. Let's just say I said a few extra prayers on the freeway. But the people we actually met? They were kind, helpful, and warm. Whether we were asking for help or just chatting in line somewhere, there was a friendliness I honestly didn't expect.

It made me think about how easily we believe what we hear. Whether it's gossip, stereotypes, or even lies about who we are or who God is, it's all too easy to accept something as true just because it's repeated often. But Proverbs 18:13 says, "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him." In other words, don't jump to conclusions. Don't assume. Take the time to see for yourself, to listen, and to experience things firsthand.

God didn't just create the world with beauty. He created it with variety, with depth, and with surprises that go beyond the surface. I think sometimes we forget that He's not just the Creator. He's the ultimate Artist. Every wave in Monterey Bay. Every massive ring inside a sequoia tree. Every kind stranger who crossed our path. It was all part of His design.

So here's what I'm walking away with. Don't believe everything you hear. Believe what God says. Let your experiences be filtered through His Word, not through fear or assumptions. And when you get the chance, step outside. Look at the world He made. You might just find yourself worshipping in the middle of a redwood forest or along a coastal cliff with the wind in your face.

Because He really is that good. And His beauty shows up everywhere, even where you least expect it.