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# THE LIGHT

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“A Church UNITED in faith, hope, & love!”

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## **BLACKBERRY BENEDICTION**

Every year about this time I look for wild blackberries.

By the end of June, when walking the margin between field and forest, one can see clusters of berries-in-the-making, looking like leafy, miniature rosebuds. A few days later pale, pink berries emerge, each no bigger than the tip of a child’s little finger. This first berry is hard and sour, but with the passing of a week’s time it

changes—first to a bright, red berry that looks like it should be good to eat but isn’t, then to a dull, purple fruit that refuses to let go of the stalk, and finally to a plump, black raspberry that will tumble into the palm of your hand with the slightest touch. Now is the time for all birds, children and other pilgrims to come to the feast.



***Blackberries are a benediction from the gracious hand of God to be received with joy and gratitude.***

Several years ago during my lunch hour, I picked two pints of blackberries, purchased a half-gallon of vanilla ice cream and treated my co-workers to an impromptu blackberry social. The sweet-tartness of the blackberries and the creamy smoothness of the ice cream blended perfectly to bring delight to an otherwise ordinary afternoon.

As we savored our treat, I wondered: “Why should there be such a thing as a blackberry? And for that matter, why should there be so many of them? No one planted them; they grew up on their

own. Why this sweet abundance?”

The scientist in me ventured an answer: The abundance of blackberries is a survival mechanism that has evolved in order to insure the propagation of blackberry DNA. The greater the number of blackberries, the greater the likelihood that not all of the blackberries will be eaten by greedy office workers, and that at least some of them will grow into new blackberry bushes, thereby insuring the survival of the species.

However, I found this explanation strangely unsatisfying, for it failed to account for the delight the blackberries brought to my coworkers and myself. Eating blackberries was more than a survival mechanism; it was a joy and a blessing.

There is something good about a world that can serve up an abundance of blackberries on a hot summer afternoon. When wild blackberries are eaten, God nourishes not only our bodies, but also our souls. The blackberries point beyond themselves to a generous and creative God who looks on creation and says, “Behold, it is very good (Genesis 1:31).” The blackberries are not an accident of nature but a benediction from the gracious hand of God to be received with joy and gratitude. Blackberries remind us that there is more to life than survival of the fittest. Life is not a contest to be survived but a joy to be celebrated.

In Christ’s love,

*Pastor Mike*