



Pastor's Thoughts—

God wants Christians to live a brilliant life. The brilliant Christian life means living in the radiant light of Jesus Christ and following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, learning spiritual insights, and sharing them with those who have not experienced them yet. There is a biblical story about the transfiguration of Jesus. One day Jesus Christ went up a high mountain, and his disciples followed him. As Peter, James, and John followed Jesus to the top of the mountain, they saw Jesus turning dazzling white, and also saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.

It was an unexpected and surprising sight for them. So, Peter was amazed and said “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters.” This unexpected sight was an event that gave them joy, hope, and confidence to become a brilliant people who could tell others what they saw and experience on the mountain.

Unexpected Joy to Find Morel Mushrooms: When I was in Korea, I could easily buy black mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, and oyster mushrooms at the market. And because I always bought it, I can tell the difference in shape and taste.

When I moved to Petoskey 7 years ago, I discovered for the first time in my life a new type of mushroom called the morel mushroom. People in northern Michigan hold the annual Morel Mushroom Festival in season and go out to collect them in the wild. I heard that Morel mushrooms are expensive. So, people keep their secret spots without telling others when they find them. Last May, while walking in the backyard of the parsonage, I found Morel mushrooms.

"Is Morel here?" I was amazed. Of course, a few days later, it was gone, but finding morel mushroom in Carleton was an unexpected joy that I treasured in my heart like a happy memory. After that happen, I remembered what Philip Yancey says, “how wonderful and happy it would be to meet "God in an unexpected place"?"

It is my spiritual insight to share with you. I was happy to find Morel's in an unexpected place, and it surprised me. However, what about seeking and finding God? We believe that God is with us anytime and anywhere, but ironically, we only seem to find Him very occasionally.

We must remember that God is always with us and is not far from us, but very close to us. Do not be surprise when God answers your prayer requests, and when you find God's guidance because Jesus said “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” Matthew 7:7. In John 16:24, “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”

Practical applications to your everyday life:

- ◆ To rejoice always in presence of God
- ◆ To pray continually in the name of Lord, Jesus Christ.
- ◆ To give thanks in all circumstances because God's steadfast love endures forever.

As a pastor, I pray that Carleton UMC will become a church led by the Holy Spirit so that all members of the church become radiant people, lead their brilliant life, and look for a bright future.

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