

## Imaginative Prayer | *Encore!*

One generation goes its way, the next one arrives,  
But nothing changes—it's business as usual for old planet earth.  
The sun comes up and the sun goes down,  
Then does it again, and again—the same old round.  
The wind blows south, the wind blows north.  
Around and around and around it blows,  
Blowing this way, then that—the whirling, erratic wind.  
All the rivers flow into the sea,  
But the sea never fills up.  
The rivers keep flowing to the same old place,  
And then start all over and do it again.  
Everything's boring, utterly boring—  
No one can find any meaning in it.  
Boring to the eye,  
Boring to the ear.  
What was will be again,  
What happened will happen again.  
There's nothing new on this earth.  
Year after year it's the same old thing.  
Does someone call out, "Hey, *this* is new"?  
Don't get excited—it's the same old story.

*Ecclesiastes 1:4-10*

Do you ever, like the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, find life *boring*? Everything's been done. Every idea has been had. No matter what new fad or fashion comes along, the truth is, we've been there, and we've done that. Maybe you're feeling that way about life these days – another wave, another lockdown, another news story, another fad diet, another streaming service, another dinner alone. And even, another *online service*. Has it become boring to your eyes and ears? On and on it goes, over and over. And after a while, the same old, same old monotony of life can begin to drain away the life in us.

But what if we could change our perspective, to see beauty in the boredom. Think that's a stretch? Maybe. But listen to what author and theologian G.K. Chesterton said:

***"It might be true that the sun rises regularly because [it] never gets tired of rising. [Its] routine might be due, not to a lifelessness, but to a rush of life. The thing I mean can be seen, for instance, in children, when they find some game or joke that they specially enjoy. A child kicks his leg rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in***

***monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daises like; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we. The repetition in Nature may not be a mere recurrence; it may be a theatrical encore."***

***From "Orthodoxy" by G.K. Chesterton***

I want to invite you to close your eyes and imagine yourself standing on an empty stage, and imagine that the stage is your life, and you're front and centre.

Can you picture it? Feel the heat from the spotlights? Do you hear the sounds of the room? Do the floorboards creak? Is there a hum of anticipation in the air?

Now, I want you to ask yourself, what if you could see life with fresh eyes, not as a collection of boring, monotonous repetitions, but as wave after wave of joyous shouts of "Encore!" from God? To wake up every morning to the sound of God cheering "Encore!"; to rise from your bed as if joining God in a standing ovation to life; to hear the music of birds singing and join with God in cheering "Encore!"; to taste every morsel of each meal, and pay compliments to the Divine chef, who created both our appetite and the food that satisfies it; as you go about your day, to know that God is in the front row, watching the moments of your life unfold with undiminished optimism, to feel the warmth of God's unrestrained smile as you show kindness to a stranger, or love to a friend.

As you consider even the most mundane daily routines, I want you see yourself stepping forward to the front of life's stage, your soul lifted by the roaring applause of Heaven, saying "Do it again! Do it again! Do it again!"

Do you hear it? Can you picture it? Do you feel God's pleasure in you?

### **SONG | GOOD GRACE (Chorus):**

***Don't let your heart be troubled  
Hold your head up high  
Don't fear no evil  
Fix your eyes on this one truth  
God is madly in love with you  
Take courage  
Hold on  
Be strong  
Remember where our help comes from***