

Lighthouses

Most Americans have seen photographs of the iconic Portland Head Light. It is an astoundingly beautiful lighthouse that I have had the pleasure of visiting several times. Recently, I watched other visitors running up and down trails in the park that surrounds it, taking their own photos from many different vantage points. I heard them exclaim, “Oh, it’s even prettier from this angle,” as they scampered up the steps. Indeed, they were right; each new angle provides a handsome sight to behold.

I waited for many years for my first chance to go there and see it. That first visit, coming at the end of a long, hot drive on a summer day, disappointed me and my family greatly. Since the whole coast was banked in with dense fog, we were unable to take any stunning photos of this beautiful landmark. The loud foghorn was blasting once a minute.

I expressed my dismay to a native standing nearby.

“Ay-uh,” he retorted in the typical, no-nonsense, brusque tone, “can’t say as it would be very useful on a sunny day.”

Churches are like lighthouses. Yes, they should be beautiful buildings, dedicated to the glory of a God that instills in us a need for beauty.

But they have a job to do—guide people lost in the fog.



“Midnight Blue” at Nubble Light in Cape Neddick, Maine during the fleeting moments of twilight.



A lighthouse might be a beautiful sight to behold on a sunny day, but it saves lives on foggy ones.



Many enjoy boating on New England’s coastal waterways.



Crabs hide in tidal pools awaiting the next high tide that will wash them back out to sea.

Still Waters

Whenever we spend a day at the seashore, my daughter always has the uncanny ability of thrusting her hand into a seemingly uninhabited tidal pool and coming up with a sea critter—a clam, or a rock crab, sometimes a hermit crab holed up inside somebody else’s abandoned seashell. She just sees a glimmer. Or her well-trained eye senses a scurry-induced ripple on the surface on the pool. She knows how skittish creatures think and where they hide.

She didn’t learn that from a book. She figured it out by watching—silently, patiently. Her brothers and I spent that time scrambling up and down the jetties in the Maine sunshine on those warm summer days. She was content to stare, to study, and to stay focused.

Sometimes, bawdy little boys, far too impatient or restless to catch a crab, benefit from her skill when she pulls a baby crab out of her pail. “Here you go. You can play with Pinchy,” she tells one amazed little tyke.

Sometimes we have to wait on God and study a still pool before plunging in. The rewards are great.