

## *Having the Sight of your Donkey*

### **Numbers 22:22-31**

“But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road. Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again. Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?" Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now." The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" "No," he said. Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown” (NIV).

Fredrick Buechner is an ordained Presbyterian minister and the author of more than thirty published books. His work encompasses different genres, including fiction, autobiography, essays, and sermons, and his career has spanned six decades. Buechner's work has often been praised for its ability to inspire readers to see the grace in their daily lives.

“The legend of Solomon's ring, the adventures of Dr. Doolittle, the attempt to decipher the dots and dashes of dolphins, and to teach chimpanzees to type out their thoughts on computers all reflect man's ancient dream of being able to talk with the animals. As fascinating as a message from outer space would be, a message from the inner space of a great blue heron or a common housefly can sunning herself on the kitchen linoleum, their mute gaze suggests a vision of reality, is beyond our imagining. What do they see in their ignorance that we in our wisdom are mostly blind to?

“In the Book of Numbers, Balaam's ass sees an angel of the Lord barring the way with a drawn sword in his hand and thereupon lies down in the middle of the road with Balaam still on his back. When Balaam clobbers him over the head with a stick, the ass speaks out reproachfully in fluent Hebrew, and then Balaam sees the angel too.

“This is perhaps a clue to the mystery. Whereas men, as a rule, see only what they expect to see and little more, the animals innocent of expectation see what is there. The next time the old mare lets fly with an exultant whinny at the empty horizon, we might do well to consider at least the possibility that the horizon may not be quite as empty as we think.”

**Fredrick Buechner *Peculiar Treasures***

### **Point for Prayer:**

What things do you not see in your life that may be plain to those around you?