

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 29:11-13

Luke 19:1-10

Seeking and Finding

This week I found myself searching for something new. My regular weekly resources seemed dry and so as I often do when I am finding nothing I looked within to discover my own need to pause and look a little deeper at my own spiritual journey in the midst of busy schedules and exciting life events.

And then I turned to one of my favorite authors and as she often does Joyce Rupp helped stop me in my tracks in such a way that I decided to share her message with you today. I found connection this week in her book "May I have this Dance" Let me begin with her poem "Seeking and Finding"

I search for God, elusive, hidden God,
I long to dwell in the heart of Mystery.

I search for my true self more of who I already am,
knowing there's so much yet to be discovered.

I search for love, the unconditional love
that enfolds me and asks to be shared.

I search for vision in the shadows of my soul,
impatiently awaiting the moment of lighting.

I search for a quiet heart amid life's harried schedule;
my soul cries out, yearning for solitude.

I search for compassion in a world gone deaf
to the cries of the hurting, and the pleas of the powerless.

I search for Home, always for Home,
unaware, of course, that I am already there.

Joyce Rupp.

I have always loved the image of finding home in God. The idea that we find our true selves in the holy works for me. I think it works for me because I know I am most at peace when I am most connected with God. Not when everything is going right in life, but when I take time to pause, to acknowledge I am not alone, I am not the soul creator of my life and destiny. And for that I am grateful. Joyce Rupp says "Deep within us is a place where we have found God and

God has found us. Once in a great while we come to this place within us and realize it is the goal of our seeking. It feels like home... We may be challenged to grow here but always in the context of a deep and strong love.”

Thomas Merton also writes that when we find our true self we find God, and when we find God we find our true self. We may find this hard to believe. I know I am always quick to find my own flaws, and dark sides. I can be impatient, expect too much of myself and others. I can get easily hurt, and look down on myself. So when I think about finding God in my true self I am quickly reminded that according to scripture I am made in the image of God. And I am made in the image of love and truth. Unfortunately “our hearts and minds are easily distracted by many other things, everyday realities such as work, maintaining a home,” raising a family, and the list goes on. As much as we yearn to stay connected with God and self we often lose our way. So if you feel like you spend most of your life seeking renewal, and yearning for connection you are not alone.

Just this week I resonated deeply with Rupp when I read; “Most of the time we search without really being aware of what is gnawing at us deep inside. We search for something called happiness. We long for a gift named peace. We search for meaning in our lives, for love, for understanding of ourselves and others, for an acceptance of the ups and downs of the human condition... Beneath all this longing is the desire for someone or something that feels like home.”

I find it interesting how this can creep up on me even when I don't know it's there. Suddenly I'm searching again. I know I am not alone in that. Often we live our day to day lives and then suddenly one day as if out of the blue we discover that yearning there again. What I find most comforting and compelling in the quest for home is that scripture and experience tell me while I search God is there. The holy is always seeking us out. Longing even more than we do to help us find our way home.

Allow I'm the first to call God mystery, God is also fullness. Perhaps that is why we always have a glimmer of searching left within us because we are always growing, desiring to and becoming more whole. Rupp put's it this way. “Just when we think we can wrap our arms around God and have God all to ourselves something happens and we find ourselves once again seeking this elusive One. It is the way of the human spirit. It is the way life happens.”

One might wonder what it looks like when you feel you have found God or rather you rediscover a connection with the fully present one. It happens for me when something gives me an inner direction that I didn't even know I was looking for - a poem, a song, a scripture... words of a friend or stranger (this piece by Joyce Rupp). Somehow they help me discover a connection or longing of my inner story. For many these times are found more deeply in moments of grief or loss. I have discovered God seeking me out when I was in crisis in a job and yet I knew there was a holy presence because I could feel it holding me strong. I will never forget four years ago sitting at the death bed of my Grandmother as she shared with me the 23rd Psalm and I felt a blanket of comfort envelop me.

Perhaps that is why scripture is full of stories of people searching for and being found by God. That is Zacchaeus' story that we heard this morning. Zacchaeus only wanted to see a famous

person from a distance. I wondered if he would have climbed the tree if he thought Jesus might single him out. Scripture is full of outcasts and sinners being met by Jesus and God. The hemorrhaging woman, the woman at the well, tax collectors, atheists, Pharisees and priests - all sought and found.

Rupp says “The seeking and finding that we do is actually a discovery of a truth already present. When God searches for us, we receive the gift of seeing how God is already with us. It may be just a glimmer but our vision is a bit more clear. Our moments of connection, of finding or being found convince us more and more of the reality of the home within us.”

Perhaps we can come to know the times when God is seeking us out by acknowledging the times of restlessness, loneliness, hunger for something more, and times of clearer vision, contentment, deep peace and beauty.

And perhaps we can come to know the times when are seeking God as we acknowledge a holy quest in times when we are willing to sit down and come to reflection and prayer, savoring the gifts we have been given and welcoming the goodness in ourselves and others.

Seeking is a constant process, one we will always encounter and we desire in our humanity to know fullness of life. “We must keep warming the heart with the embers of remembered glimpses or feelings of home. It is also vital to have companions to share the journey with us....We can discover our home when we hear another’s story of seeking. We may resonate so much with the story that our own seeking is greatly energized. The search seems more real. It seems possible. It’s as if another person’s story beckons to us to believe that our own home is real. The search for fullness of life is an eternal, communal one with God others and self.

Guided Meditation - Seeking and Finding - June.