



Journal entry from 4/6/2020

*“To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.”*

William Blake

Yesterday we celebrated Palm Sunday by livestreaming. Although I have led many Palm Sunday worship services, it is cliché to say it was different. But it was different in a way which surprised me. Although separated by physical distance I felt the spiritual connection in a way which could not be claimed by the use of technology to connect us.

Yesterday was a beautiful day, a day of beauty which defied, even mocked the darkness brought in by wars being waged in hospitals and homes and other institutions. We are told that this week will be a very bad week, like another 911, just.... this.... week. This pandemic has left heartbreak, and loss in its wake and will continue to do so for some time to come. We know that an end to the pandemic will eventually come, and we yearn for it. But for now, we know not what the future brings. So, we make do. Many walk outdoors, some rediscover old hobbies set aside and left on hold in the busy life prior to the current life experience in which we find ourselves. Some work on puzzles, others play video games and watch movies and television programs they have already seen before.

Some have the television news on, glued to every interview, every briefing, and every breaking story. Some work. Some get married, and some have funerals and wakes to which few, if any family and friends can attend. Babies are being born. And many bide time, treading the day's water just to stay afloat in the calamity. But if anything has been clear during this time of great challenge is that all we have, any of us is today. Today. I know I say this all the time and it is cliché to say that today is a gift, a package we have only begun to unwrap and enjoy and whose moments we can use to make meaning, and give added value to that day. But it is true. And it perhaps has never been more true than right now...today. While walking last night Poet William Blake's opening lines to a poem occupied my thoughts.

What if we could see eternity in a grain of sand? Or see heaven in the miracle of a flower? What if we could treat and savor each moment as an eternity?

What if....what if we could stop the thoughts of worry and dread from bringing clouds to invade this bright day and see the riotous beauty of spring teeming all around us? What if?....what if we could stop even for a few moments the worrisome way we rob these moments of the opportunity to love those close to us or see beauty in the small, but beautiful? What if we could stop the "what will tomorrow bring?" thinking and rejoice today. To dance, to laugh, to rejoice with all that there is in us to give? Time would stand still..

One of my favorite authors, Thomas Wolfe once wrote in "Look Homeward Angel", the following: "Each moment is the fruit of forty thousand years."

Each moment is precious beyond measure, and to love, to find beauty or act with nobility and purpose in each moment is to apprehend the eternal and share the heart of God. The richness and blessings of each day are built moment by moment, experience upon experience. And each day lived with purposeful determination prepares us for forming meaningful experiences born in the crucible of the next day's experiences. Don't bankrupt your today but wishing for tomorrow. Oh, I know that it is all we can do to muster making it through those days which seem impossibly long. Days filled with pain, discouragement, depression, despair, and seeming hopelessness. There are those days. But we endure those days by drawing from the experiences of many days previous to this that have strengthened us, nourished us, and taught us that we are not alone, that we are loved.

Every Sunday morning at worship, I open with these words, “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.” Paul, in his writing to the Philippians wrote the following in the 4th chapter: *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”*

So, let us love as deeply today as we can. Let us reach out and lend a hand where we can. May we sing and dance and play with as much joy as we can muster. And may we look deeply into the small, the overlooked, the sometimes forgotten but beautiful and see a glimpse the hand of God. We will prevail, so be of good cheer and carpe diem....carpe diem with all the depth and breadth this day’s experience has to offer!

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