

Reflection

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The themes, that touched me from our readings today, are Life and Love. The first, Life, is from Ezekiel, “O my people I will put my spirit in you that you may live I have promised, and I will do it.”

Second, Jesus’ answer to the scholar of the law, reaches back into the Hebrew testament. In Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, we read “... Love God, your God with your whole heart, love God with all that is in you, and write these commandments I have given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you.” Jesus is faithful to the Jewish tradition and the heart of Jewish spirituality, one that emphasizes the essentials. Our experience of LIFE and LOVE is interconnected. If we love, we experience life, if we are truly alive, we love – it is a mystery whose name is God.

Krista Tippett, in her book, *Becoming Wise*, notes that “Our world is abundant with quiet, hidden lives of beauty, courage and goodness. There are millions of people at any given moment giving themselves over to service, risking hope, and all the while ennobling us all. To take such goodness in and let it matter – to let it define our reality as much as the headlines of violence- is a choice we can make to live by the light in the darkness, to be brave and free ... and loving. Taking in the good, whenever and wherever we find it gives us new eyes for seeing and living and loving.”

We are collectively gripped by unnecessary death, destruction and cruelty, COVID-19, rampant racism, needless, uncontrolled violence, hunger, unemployment, homelessness – the list goes on. As people of conscience, we lament; it does not have to be this way. How we approach it is what defines us as people. When faced with desolation, we ask, “Where is God?” Everything in us wants to escape.

Yet these tragic moments call us to be more present. They are moments to ask, “Who is my sister or brother? Who am I called to care for?” Survival as human beings is possible only through love.

Jesus’s words today are spoken to us. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” So, we are back to the mystery of life and love. How do we offer love and let it matter more than the disintegration around us?

Maya Angelou writes this about love: “Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, permeates walls to arrive at its destination.” Something that we know deep in our being, if we pay attention, is that God makes good on the promise to match our gifts with God’s own. So when we see the work is too hard, the situation is hopeless, our resources too meager, our efforts insufficient.

We hear Jesus saying to us as he did to the disciples “How many loaves do you have?”

How many do we have? One, two, five. Take them in your hands, holding them lightly, bless them, break them up to share with whoever is in front of you. Never mind, if it is not enough. We don't need to fix the whole world. It is up to us to share what we have with whoever is standing right in front of us. The rest will happen because God is God.

And when we love, we experience life. If we are truly alive, we love.