

Take Home Worship – Sunday October 11, 2020

By Rev. Julie Lebrun - Inlet United Church, Port Moody BC

Greetings to everyone who reads this. My prayer is that you are “well in your own soul” today...or if it’s a challenging time...that you be “well in your own soul” for some moments of the day.

This is a Thanksgiving like no other I have never known. Many of us are not gathering with others this Thanksgiving because of Covid. People who live in senior residences are not even permitted to go out.

And yet Thanksgiving comes around on the calendar no matter what’s going on in the world or in our lives.

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19 Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy (NRSV)

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Reflection

This is my favorite story for Thanksgiving. Ten people are healed and yet only one comes back to say thank you. I’m sure the other nine had good reasons for not returning to offer thanks. After all they had been separated from life because of their illness. Why wouldn’t they return home as fast as possible?

We usually have good reasons for not taking the time to express gratitude. Yet something more happens to the person who returns to offer their thanks. Jesus say to him, “your faith has made you well.” Some translations of this text say “your faith has made you whole.” Something more happens to the person who returns to give thanks. They are well...they are whole.

Researcher Brene Brown links gratitude/giving thanks and joy

- her research found that joyful people were thankful
- and thankful people were joyful

Practicing gratitude is something we can practice every day and this will make a difference in our ability to experience joy.

I don't mean this to sound easy...give thanks and you will always be joyful...because sometimes life can be challenging. And frankly we can't be joyful all the time. But we can learn to live from a place of gratitude. I think practicing living from a place of gratitude is essential to our wellness...to us being whole.

Brene Brown writes, "If we're not practicing gratitude and allowing ourselves to know joy, we are missing out on the two things that will actually sustain us during the inevitable hard times."

Living during this global pandemic affects the social contacts we can have and the things we can do. It seems that a practice of gratitude is more difficult and also more important than ever.

I'm going to share a quote and ideas from the book "The Gifts of Imperfection...Your Guide to a Wholehearted Life" by Brene Brown. Our online worship is using this book as a Worship series. We also have a book study on the go.

"Sometimes we miss out on the bursts of joy because we're too busy chasing down extraordinary moments. Other times we're so afraid of the dark that we don't dare let ourselves enjoy the light.

A joyful life is not a floodlight of joy. That would eventually become unbearable.

I believe a joyful life is made up of joyful moments gracefully strung together by trust, gratitude, inspiration, and faith"

Happiness in Greek is the word makarios. It is related to external situations like good fortune or good health...certainly not bad things....but dependant on external circumstances. Joy is related to our inner being. Joy in Greek is the word chairo. It means "culmination of being" and the "good mood of the soul."

It seems that regularly expressing gratitude for the smallest things of your day helps us experience joy. It helps us in our culmination of being and having a good mood of the soul. It helps us to be well and to be whole. Oh my, that sounds good to me!

So this Thanksgiving, regardless of the external circumstances, I invite you to practice gratitude. Name, write down, or draw 3 things you are grateful for in your day. Begin to do this every day either upon waking or going to sleep or both. Or maybe you'll find a time that's best for you. Whatever works for you to practice gratitude every day...make it habit.

My prayer is that you are "well in your own soul" today...or if it's a challenging time...that you be "well in your own soul" for some moments of the day and to notice and give thanks. May it be so, Amen.