

Scripture:

John 14:15-21

The Voice of Love

I invite you to quiet your heart, quiet your mind, listen to the voice of love. Jesus calls us loved, beloved. Jesus has said he has left that spirit breath of love with us. We are not alone. Stopping, breathing deeply, holding on to a heart of faith, listening to the sounds of the creator gives us opportunity to hear from the holy.

If we listen to Jesus, if he is the way the truth the life, if he is the archetype of humanity then the voice he heard calling him the beloved is the same voice calling us the beloved. We are invited into the same story, that same learning, that same life journey to know deeply we also are beloved.

Too often life distracts us from that reality, we get into the rush of things, the all consuming details, the deadlines and the tasks ahead and we are unable to stop and hear the heart of God. We are so filled with devices, we don't know how to unplug and detach from all of life that threatens to derail us. Busyness keeps us from hearing that voice. Eugene Peterson used to say "I refuse to be busy." I long to refuse it too.

We get so consumed with all the other external voices that try to tell us who we are. Henri Nouwen taught us that there are three lies we often listen to

I am what I have

I am what I do

I am what others say about me

And we allow those lies to dictate how we live and even what we believe about ourselves. We find ourselves caught in cycles of trying to prove ourselves to others our family, our colleagues, our neighbours, our acquaintances, our friends.

And so to quiet down, to cultivate healthy listening and even solitude in our minds and our spirits and our lives gives us a chance to get above the rush of the noise. To transcend all those other voices that attempt to define us and listen to the voice that has birthed us in holy love. The voice that we come from. The voice that calls us beloved.

It is so clear to me that until I know I am so deeply loved I will not fully love others. To the degree that I know I am loved I can then love others. The less I am connected to that love for myself the less able I am to love the way Jesus loves. Freely, unconditionally, with lavish grace and hope for others.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God and to love others as yourself. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength and Love your neighbour as yourself.

In Western Christianity we have done a relatively good job of trying to love our neighbour and trying to love God without any sense of self-love. In fact self love has been condemned at least in the Christianity I grew up in. And the greatest commandment is to love God and to love neighbour as yourself. I think contemplative practice is essential for us to access that message of love for ourselves. So that that love can then be an offering from us to others. Phileena Heuerte says “without that connection to the source of our belovedness we project onto the world our own ideas of what we think love is. We have our own agendas for how to make the world a better place and often times those attempts are lacking in effectiveness and too often we then try to take better care of everyone else then we are taking care of ourselves and there is an incongruence there with love. So loving self and learning to love self learning to access that Devine love that calls us the beloved enables us to let that love flow through us to the degree that we are transformed our world is transformed.

And so I invite you to take a moment with me and pause and listen to the voice of the holy around you.

You are my beloved
I love you
You are precious in my eyes
You are not alone
You a wholly loved

Amen.

Modified from Phileena Heuertes “Hearing the voice of Love” The Work of the People.