

Text: Psalm 19 and Proverbs 1:20-33

Title: Interdependency, Freedom and Mutual Love

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Introduction:

"I turned back to the sun. It was going. The sun was going, and the world was wrong. The grasses were wrong; they were platinum. Their every detail of stem, head, and blade shone lightless and artificially distinct as an art photographer's platinum print. This color has never been seen on earth. The hues were metallic; their finish was matte. The hillside was a nineteenth-century tinted photograph from which the tints had faded. The sky was navy blue. My hands were silver. All the distant hills' grasses were finespun metal which the wind laid down. I was watching a faded color print of a movie filmed in the Middle Ages; I was standing in it, by some mistake.

It is August 2017 and author Annie Dillard writes her experience of the solar eclipse:

From all the hills came screams. A piece of sky beside the crescent sun was detaching. It was a loosened circle of evening sky, suddenly lighted from the back. It was an abrupt black body out of nowhere; it was a flat disk; it was almost over the sun. That is when there were screams. At once this disk of sky slid over the sun like a lid. The sky snapped over the sun like a lens cover. The hatch in the brain slammed. Abruptly it was dark night, on the land and in the sky.

Psalm 19, this imaginative song that reveals the invisible God, is sung by the sky. It is the sky, and the sun that speak out without words to tell us about a mystery that holds the world together. The metaphor we are given is that God is light. And just as we are dependent on the sun, her warmth, on her rhythms of day/night, on her light, we are dependent on the nourishment, energy and life of the Creator and Sustainer – the God of our understanding.

I have been struck this week by the notion of interdependence. That is the state of being dependent upon one another : mutual dependence, a form of symbiosis, of close mutual interdependence of two species of organisms or things.

As I reflected – I was overwhelmed by the evidence that humans don't seem to know how to self-regulate – we either have too much or too little, have little power and self destruct or too much power become destructive.

This week as we remembered the 20 year anniversary of 9/11. We heard people's experience of powerlessness, and memorialised the 2977 people who had died.

What we didn't hear about was that between 2001 and 2021 about 241,000 people have been killed in the Afghanistan and Pakistan war zone. More than 71,000 of those killed have been civilians.

We seem to oscillate between extreme poles. In our relationship with ourselves, in our relationship with others and our relationship with the earth and sky.

In Earth Care and Climate Change literature, the question is often posed:

- Can humanity and the Earth coexist?

Mainstream Christian Theology has often given the upper hand to humanity, naming us as stewards and giving humanity a carte blanche over the earth, our home.

Yet I wonder what a focus on interdependence looks like for us.

Vancouver Theologian Dr. Sally MacFague, in her book *Blessed are the Consumers* writes:

- Nature is the grandest, most intricate, most complex system of give-and-take, of debt and payback, of borrowing and lending, and of sacrifice (albeit unwilling sacrifice).
- Everything—from one-celled organisms to mosquitoes to whales to human beings—lives within a vast system of exchange, whether they know it or not, whether they want to or not.
- We give and take constantly at every level of existence, simply to exist at all.
- Every breath we take is borrowed,
- Nature says this is the way the system works: if we live at all, we live off each other.”

In this careful balance of ecological economics, we, as conscious beings, are invited to a relationship with the earth around us. A relationship, like any relationship that involves careful consideration about how we show up.

- It requires our self-awareness
- It requires a spirituality that leads not only to delight and joy in the beauty of the world but also to limitation, self-restraint, a sense of finitude, the need to share space, as we come to realize who we are in the scheme of things.

Remember a time when you negotiated sharing a space with a new friend, or a new travel companion, or you moved in with a new spouse, or moved to a new house with the same partner?

Remember what it was like – to feel out of control, so you burst forth with angry words and take too much control. Or you begin to feel insecure, so you burst off forth with demands for attention to ensure the other is never going to leave and you become clingy?

Hidden deep in our faith are practices that grow our self-awareness, and our letting go.

It is a gift of wisdom.

The wisdom that is like a woman, showing up everywhere – in the market place, on the busiest street corners, at every doorway to every building.

And wisdom offers us another way.

When that inner awareness of powerlessness takes hold:

Wisdom says – let go

When that inner awareness of feeling out of control takes hold:

Wisdom says – surrender

To be in the discomfort of these little deaths. And thus hold the balance of interdependency.

The wisdom of the way of Christ – modelled to us in Jesus, is to grow in our self awareness so that we are conscious in this economy of giving and receiving. Losing our life to save it.

And in our sense of agency, our freedom to choose, we get to self monitor as an act of Love.

So that in this economy of interdependence:

- We can take it one step further and give when we see the balance sheet to be unfair to the weak, the oppressed, the needy.
 - Human beings have the capability of sharing when they have too much, of sacrificing for others, of limiting our wants so the needs of others can be met.
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Can humanity and the earth co-exist? Perhaps is not the question.

Perhaps the question is where are we willing to self limit, to practice the wisdom of self restraint for the good of the other?

To rethink our ways, regularly:

- Less or no meat
- Our use of plastics - Reusable cloth bags
- Car pooling

May we each day consider our interdependence – in small and big lives.

With God's help.

Amen.