The Serviceberry: Life Code

Week 7: All Flourishing Is Mutual

How Shall We Live?

We began our journey contemplating the gifts of Life. We have explored scarcity and abundance, receiving and giving, belonging and responsibility, and the sacred values that guide our choices. And now we return to the question that has been quietly unfolding throughout this entire series: How shall we live? How shall I live… knowing that we belong to one another, that our lives are sustained by countless gifts, and that our presence and participation can contribute to something greater than ourselves?

Robin Wall Kimmerer's serviceberry offers us a beautiful image of this possibility. The tree nourishes the birds, who scatter its seeds. The life of the tree becomes part of the life of the birds, and the life of the birds helps make new trees possible. Each participates in a larger unfolding of Life.

We too may never know all the ways our lives touch other lives. The smallest kindness may awaken hope. A word of encouragement may inspire courage. A simple act of generosity may set something in motion that continues long after we have forgotten it. Like the serviceberry, we are participants in a living network of gifts, relationships, and possibilities. And perhaps something sacred becomes possible between us that none of us could bring into being alone.

1. Our Flourishing Extends Beyond Ourselves

We often think of flourishing in personal terms: becoming healthier, happier, wiser, more prosperous, or more spiritually fulfilled. *But what if the fullest expression of our selves is not contained within our individual lives?*

A teacher's flourishing may be expressed through students who discover their own gifts. A parent's love may flower in grandchildren they never meet. A small act of encouragement may awaken a possibility in another person that changes the direction of their life, and a whole community.

The original giver may never know. And perhaps that's part of life's mystery. We cannot measure the fullness of our lives by examining only what has happened to us. Some of the most beautiful things our lives make possible may happen because of us… beyond our sight.

DISCUSSION

- Who has contributed to your flourishing in ways they may never fully know? How might recognizing those unseen gifts change the way you understand your own life?

- When you consider the idea that the fullest expression of yourSelf may not be contained within your individual life, what does that awaken in you?

2. I and Thou

In Unity, we teach that there is One Presence and One Power (aka “God”), and that each of us is a unique expression of that Divine Life. We are not separate containers holding little portions of God, but individualized expressions of the same Infinite Life, each revealing different strengths, gifts, qualities, and possibilities.

Think about music. A single instrument can create extraordinary beauty. But when instruments come together, harmonies become possible that no instrument could create alone. *Harmony does not require sameness. It requires relationship.*

Each instrument retains its unique voice, yet together they create something greater. Likewise, our individuality is not an obstacle to Oneness; it is one of the ways Oneness becomes beautifully expressed.

Now, let's go deeper. We often think of experiencing God, or *The Presence*, as something inward and personal, discovered through prayer, meditation, or contemplation. And that is true. But what if The Presence can, and must, also be experienced in the sacred space *between us*?

The Jewish philosopher Martin Buber explored this through the *I–Thou* relationship. Rather than approaching another as someone to be understood, managed, or used, we meet them with genuine openness and presence – seeing them as a unique expression of the Divine. Then, something remarkable can emerge: trust, compassion, understanding, healing, or a possibility neither person could have created alone.

Communion with one another is also a way we experience aspects of the Divine Presence… in our midst… between your heart and mine. Remember, God is also known as *Love*. A creative force which can be experienced, embodied and expressed.

DISCUSSION

- Have you experienced something emerging through a relationship that neither person could have created alone? What made that encounter feel different or even sacred?
- If harmony doesn't require sameness, but relationship, what might this teach us about how we approach people whose gifts, perspectives, or ways of being differ from our own?

3. From Divine Potential to Divine Expression

There is a distinction between the Wholeness or completeness of Divine Life and the expression of its infinite potential.

Consider a seed. The potential for a tree is present within it, yet the living tree emerges through relationship with soil, sunlight, water, and the larger environment. Similarly, Divine Life is whole and complete, yet its infinite possibilities find expression through the unique relationships, circumstances, choices, and creative participation of life itself. We must participate in bringing Divine possibilities into expression.

And perhaps no one of us can express all that Divine Life can bring forth through us together. This is the deeper mystery of mutual flourishing. Our participation matters. Our gifts matter. Our relationships matter. We are participating in the unfolding of One Life through one another.

DISCUSSION

- If we truly understood ourselves as participants in bringing Divine possibilities into expression, how might that change our understanding of spiritual growth, our relationships, or our purpose in life?

4. Looking Back Over Our Seven-Week Journey

Seven weeks ago, we began with a small book and a big question: What can the patterns that sustain life teach us about how to live?

Week One — The Gift of Life Before we achieve, accomplish, or earn anything, we are already recipients of the extraordinary gift of Life.

Week Two — The Myth of Scarcity Our assumptions about limitation and lack can shape what we perceive as possible. Awareness opens us to new possibilities.
Week Three — Abundance Is Circulation Abundance is not simply what we possess. Life flourishes through movement, exchange, generosity, and participation.
Week Four — Nothing Flourishes Alone We are not isolated individuals who occasionally connect. We exist within an intricate web of relationships that continually sustain and shape us.
Week Five — The Sacred Economy What we value shapes how we live. Our practiced values reveal what we are cultivating and what kind of life we are helping create.
Week Six — From Gratitude to Responsibility Gratitude awakens awareness, and awareness can awaken our capacity to respond creatively and consciously to Life.
Week Seven — All Flourishing Is Mutual Our deepest fulfillment is not separate from the flourishing of Life. Our unique gifts and participation help bring possibilities into expression that extend beyond ourselves.

Together, they invite a transformation in how we understand ourselves, our relationships, and our place within the Whole.

DISCUSSION | What Will We Carry Forward?

- Looking back over these seven weeks, which teaching, story, conversation, or realization has stayed with you most strongly? Why has it been meaningful?

- Has anything shifted in how you see yourself, others, abundance, gratitude, or your relationship with Divine Life? Is there an old assumption or way of living that you are beginning to release?

Closing Circle

The fullest expression of who we are becomes possible through the life we share.
Invite each person to complete these two statements, allowing everyone time to share without interruption or the need for a response.

• *One gift I am taking from these seven weeks is…*

• *One way I want to live more consciously from what I have discovered is…*

A Thanksgiving Blessing

May we remember that we are one with the Creator and all creation,
May we remember that Life is a gift we never receive or achieve alone.
May our gratitude deepen our awareness of the countless lives that sustain us.
May our awareness awaken generosity, and may our generosity
become a blessing beyond what we can see.
May we recognize our unique gifts, honor the gifts of others, and discover
the beautiful possibilities that emerge when we bring them together.
And may we live with the growing realization that our fulfillment
is not separate from the purpose and fulfillment of Life itself.
All flourishing is mutual. May we be blessed, and may we be a blessing.
And so it is.
Amen.