

Gracious God, May these words be full of your wisdom. Amen

It is ironic that during the Sunday that I am to be preaching on the Word Made Flesh, we have chosen to cancel worship to do our part in slowing the spread of the Coronavirus. Grocery store shelves have been emptied, LPS has been canceled and we are struggling with the decisions that we make. Are we being wise or are we in a panic? It is a surreal world. We pray for those in nursing homes, assisted living and rehab units. And we pray for our health care workers. We pray for their perceptive vision, their hands that heal and hold, their voices who bring comfort and the dedication of their hearts. These jobs that they hold are often difficult. But, during this time in history they are pushed beyond their limits. We pray for God's guidance, wisdom, endurance.

It is such a time as this that we are called to John's version of creation. THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND

- DWELT AMONG US or
- MOVED INTO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD,
- PITCHED A TENT IN OUR WORLD.

All those images let us know that God is with us in very concrete ways. It helps us to remember that Jesus, the incarnation of God's grace was born fragile, vulnerable, crying up a storm. His new born whaling intermixed with the song of the angels.

He held children and blessed them. He cried real tears when his best friend died. He healed folk with his dirty, calloused hands. He cried in the garden. He loved good food and good drink and feasted with his disciples. His voice rang through crowds of people. When he was baptized, he came up out of the Jordan soaking wet. He fished- throwing out wide nets, he built tables and the Kingdom of God. When he died he hurt deep within his body and soul. This Jesus was a man who understood the wounds and joy of the world. And in his brokenness, his

compassion, and his joy, he modeled for us how important our bodies are to do God's work.

Krista Tippet tells us that there are very important way that our bodies speak to us as we search for wisdom in our spiritual journey

1. THE BODY AND SPIRIT AS ONE- The Spirit and the Body are not separated in our desire to be whole with God. Our bodies were CREATED by God. Remember in the first creation story- After each bit of creation was created – God said, "It is good." That includes our body's intermixed God spirit. Every bone, every cell, every atom of our bodies are intertwined with the Holy Spirit. It is important for us to learn to love every aspect of our selves-Mind, body and spirit as one. In the early church, Paul , influenced by Gentile theology that said the spirit is pure and good. And things like desire for pleasure, rest, physical love, good food- all were bad. BUT, our Jewish tradition tells us that God brought forth ALL of creation and said that it was good. Beauty, craftsmanship, swaying trees are an apart of creation are good and as so are we. Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." But the greater truth is "I taste, see, touch- therefore I am." You see God has given us all these senses to find the same joy in creation that God finds. We find pleasure in being held. Our eyes give us joy as we see the incredible colors of the forest or the sky. Our fingers and knuckles find delight in kneading bread. Our legs remember the gift of dance and running as fast as we could. The satification of sweat of our bodies after we played a long game of soccer. Our hands touch those who ache. Our noses love the smell of coffee brewing in the morning, or our tongues can't get enough of the taste of hot chocolate on a winter day.

Our bodies remember these things. I still remember the deepest feeling of being blessed when holding Luke when he was a baby. I was amazed that my body could make a human being. My arms and voice (especially my voice) could comfort him. This precious child was a blessing. And the simple moment of holding a sleeping child was joy that my body will never forget.

2 BROKEN BODIES- Another aspect of the body's wisdom is to realize that we have limits. Sometimes our bodies are flawed and broken. We are not to live a "photo shopped life." We try to, but can't cover up our imperfections. We are not models. We are real people, seeking real relationships. We don't see the reality of one another when we try to carry an image of that has been painted over.. God does not want us to hide our brokenness. WE carry with us our history in our bodies. When we were young we could ride down the stairs in a clothes basket and enjoy the thrill of it. Sledding down the scariest hill was pure joy! But, as our bodies' age- with arthritis, or achy bones, muscles that have repaired themselves again and again, we don't do those things anymore. We listen to our limits. And when discovering our limits, we begin to set priorities- Like loving one another, like caring for one another. Paying attention to our world. Listen to our lives that includes when our bodies need rest, or are hurting... Ignoring our bodies is not noble.

Parker Palmer went through a period of severe depression. Friends would come over and tell him that if he would just get out of the house or go do something, he would feel better. He grew weary of everyone's advice. BUT, there was a Quaker friend who came to visit him every week. He sat by Parker, willing to sit in silence if needed... and with his permission, he massaged Parker's feet every week. The dedication and the pure pleasure of having his feet massaged . the power of positive touch, was a real ministry for him. He remembered what pleasure felt like again. In the midst of his brokenness, there was a person who wasn't trying to fix him, just love him in the name of Christ.

3; CHRIST IN FLESH AND BLOOD- In the midst of our brokenness, in the midst of our giftedness, we are called to listen to not only our lives, but the lives of the people around us. What is it that we are called to do here and now, mind, body and spirit as one, in the midst of a pandemic?

Christ cared and cares for the least of these. Through the holy spirit , God's light shines in very real ways. Let's in very concrete ways care for those who can't care for themselves. Let's grocery shop for those who can't get out. Let's hand out toilet paper, sanitizer and soap to those who have run out. Let's call and check in on each other. This is NOT a time of survival of the fittest mentality.

There is a great image of God. God as a parent, is strong. At the same time God gets down on the floor and plays with his/ her children, gets messy as they trod through the mud.... And stays up all night when a child is sick with a high fever.....

Let's be strong as we can be, let's stay connected with one another, and when we get tired and or weak, let's rest. And let's trust that God will guide us in these confusing times.