



Monday Musing: August 26, 2024.
Seasons...

I like to joke around with my kids telling them there are really only two seasons. The first is the season when we don't wear socks or closed shoes. It's all about bare feet and goes from May to October. The second season is the one for socks and such and it goes from October to May. So, in my world, there is summer and winter with two transition periods that tell us to get out our different footwear. The transitions are spring and fall of course. Yet, as much as the seasons change, there is an underlying continuity in the nature of things around us even while there is change over time too.

Paths in the forest become bare and then full of greenery and then over time can be either overgrown or widened through use.

Trees start out small and green, then bare in the winter, and then with each passing year they grow and change and unless cut down, or diseased, they remain year after year.

We change. And I don't just mean our footwear. We grow in different ways: physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. We grow in each of these ways over time and not equally like the different trees or grasses grow differently. It depends on how our lives are unfolding. So, there is the 'us' as a child, a youth, an adult, a senior, changing like a forest through time, and yet always the 'us' underneath but not the same, but us, nevertheless. And there is also the time in life when we look back to what was and resolve it unto ourselves, as we turn to look towards what will be, our last years unfolding. Yes, that turning point is often called Midlife. I wonder if trees or forests do this in some way.

For me, the bible is like my summer and winter or even the two parts of life. There are two testaments, what we call the Old and the New. The Old Testament, also known as the Hebrew Scriptures, was written in ancient Hebrew roughly 2500 to 3500 years ago. The New Testament was written in ancient Greek over about 1900 years ago. The Hebrew scriptures tell the history of God and the people who came to know God, the Israelites through to the Jews who returned from Babylon, surviving through empire after empire. The New Testament tells the story of Jesus and of the spread of what became known as the church. But behind both stories is God. God is the continuity, the path taken, the thread that stitches it all together. The one God, like we have the one 'us' inside.

In the second century of the Common Era, or AD (in the Year of Our Lord), there was a man named Marcion who had followers who, with him, claimed that the God of the Gospel who sent Jesus was the true Supreme Being and that the Hebrew God was a malevolent Demiurge or creator god. Marcion rejected the whole of the Hebrew scriptures. But Jesus didn't. Hmmm? Do you?

Often people today tell me they can't believe in the Old Testament because 'that' God is wrathful and murderous and just can't be the God of Jesus. But that God is the God of Jesus because Jesus was Jewish. People will tell me no; Jesus' God is the God of Love and Justice. This is true. But if you really delve into the Hebrew scriptures, the God of Love and Justice is there. And delving into the New Testament, that wrathful God is there too. Hmm? But God is the same God. Or ...?

I believe all things evolve through time. So, people evolved, civilizations and knowledge evolved, languages evolved, boat making and political systems, and all things evolved, even the paths in the forest, so, did our understanding of God evolve? Or did God evolve???

In our hymn books, we sing *Eternal, Unchanging, We Sing to your Praise*. Which is it then? Is God eternal and unchanging? Or does God change? Or is it us who have grown and changed in our understanding and relationship with God? Or is it even reciprocal?!!

Just some questions to begin the week as we also move into transition time of September in the forest, in the church, and in our lives.

Peace always,
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Prayer

Holy One, of Love and Justice always,
Who touches our hearts with the seeds of new life,
In the dark, growing and changing through to the light,
Ending and transforming in a new dark,
We meet you there, still, and always,
In our beginning, in our ending, evolving,
And in all our beginnings and endings through the seasons
Of our years, we meet you still and always. Amen.



Scripture this Week

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Psalms 45

James 1:17-27

Mark 7:1-23

Arise my love and come away!

Praise for the anointed hero.

Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.

Not from outside but from within is a person defiled.

TR Question (theological reflection)

See above... and what do you make of Jesus' changing his mind in Mark 7:24-30?