



Monday April 7th, 2025.
Pausing...

Last summer, after submitting my thesis for the final review of my supervising professors, I began to read Neil deGrasse Tyson's book "Astrophysics for People in a Hurry." I knew I only had a few weeks before my thesis would be emailed back with comments for changes. So, I began to read.

Neil deGrasse Tyson is an excellent writer, clear, easy to understand. He is an excellent lecturer too, being quite entertaining! Josh and I saw him a year ago.

Astrophysics is about the nature of space and time, the whole universe, from Big Bang to black holes, and quantum mechanics and quarks. For this topic, a really good presenter is key. Yet, as I read, I found myself increasingly thinking about the forest and how carefree I am when I'm in the forest. Karen and I both feel this way. The forest is for those not in a hurry. The forest is a place of pausing.

The beauty of the forest is a gift to the spirit. The forest is a place to be immersed in quiet and to notice. It is a close place, palpable, with sights, sounds, scents, things old and new, snow, ice, and blossoms and new grass. Everything is so real, near, knowable. The forest is the universe up close.

For me, Jesus is like the forest, like nature - real, up close, tangible, human. Through the scriptures we see, hear, and share time with those who lived with him and who experienced his love, his care, his seeking to amend, ameliorate, make right. Justice. Peace. For me, Jesus revealed the universality of God - immense, incomprehensible - as nature is to astrophysics. The logos, or rationality, or accounting of creation, was made flesh and walked among them.

I guess that's how I can explain how I notice God's presence in the forest, in the strength of the trees, the swaying of branches, the flowing of creeks and rivers, the sounds of living things too. It is like God beyond us and with us, one and the same.

Genesis begins with two ancient creation stories. Each is very different from the other. Genesis 1:1 to 2:4a begins with water, through which land emerges, separating the water. And then God creates the universe and nature and in the end humanity. Genesis 2:4b and following, begins a new creation story that begins in the dust, then God makes rivers, then man, then the animals. This story leads to the Garden of Eden, the making of woman from man, the temptation and the moment of disobedience, and God walking and talking with the two humans on earth.

In the first story, God is far away, transcendent. In the second story, God is close, immanent. The question is not how to put these two ancient stories together to make them connect like chapter one to chapter two. The question is why did the ancients keep both stories? The answer lies in what the bible is about – God. Together the two creation myths from the ancients tell us about God, as they knew God to be for them: the creator of all things, the entire universe and the one who is also close and near walking with us, speaking to our hearts in the garden we call earth.

Universe. Forest. Transcendent. Immanent. Together our world. And our God.
May you know peace in this place, may you know the Presence walks with you,

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Prayer

Holy Creator, beyond us, around us,
among us, between us, walking with us,
with and within us, speaking to our spirits.
Comforter of our souls,
in the forest, by the rivers, above in the branches,
the heart of all that is,
flowing through, bringing life to birth,
Taking death and making it new.
Amen.

Scripture this Week Liturgy of the Palms

Psalms 118 The stone that the builders rejected...
Luke 19:28-40 Jesus enters Jerusalem to cheering crowds.

Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4-9a They struck my back and plucked my beard.
Psalm 31 My body and soul are wasting.
Philippians 2:5-11 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ.
Luke 22:14 to 23:49 Jesus final journey: betrayal, arrest, crucified.

TR Question (theological reflection)

Where was God through Jesus' last week?