

I Am Because We Are

Sunday September 18, 2016

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*Let us pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight O God our rock and our redeemer. Amen.*

I find this to be such an interesting time in our church year...

It's a time of intentional re-connection.

It's a time of re-centering, and deep listening.

It's a time of returning to our rhythms, while still holding space gently enough to allow for wild play and reckless abandon.

It's still a time of later nights, and warm breezes, before winter's shorter days and longer nights descend.

And so, I don't think it's a coincidence, that these first five weeks of fall – September into early October –

Have been designated as a new-ish liturgical season: The season of Creation.

As we move from summer to autumn, we prepare ourselves to witness great change. The leaves change from green to vibrant colours, the temperature decreases, the birds fly south. We mirror creation's rhythm in that we, too, long for change.

And God longs for us to long for change.

So, we journey through a season in our church year that is intentionally designed to help us focus on our relationship with Creation, how we are called to be stewards of the earth and creatures, and the intricate web of interconnectedness out of which we've been created.

And to help us do that this week, we hear this story from Luke's Gospel, where Jesus tells a parable about two things that are lost: a sheep and a coin. In each case, when the lost creature or item is found, we hear the same words: "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep

that was lost.” “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.” There’s a profound vision of interconnectedness found in these parable stories... The reminder that something is missing from the whole body, when that one is lost. And as I was sitting with this story this week, I realized that the shepherd and the woman, they don’t just say, “REJOICE.” The instruction is clear: “Rejoice WITH ME.” They have found their lost treasure, and so they rejoice in community. Their well-being is intimately connected to others.

Over the course of two weeks – this week and next – I want to explore the African philosophy of Ubuntu – because as I was thinking about this reading this week, and also sitting in the midst of Creation Time, I kept coming back to this idea, that basically says that we are who and what we are because we exist in connection to everything else. My individual humanity is what it is **because of you**. I am because you are... I am because we are...

So to help us start thinking about Ubuntu, I want to share a video that’s about ten minutes long, from South African environmental and literacy activist, Boyd Varty. In this talk, entitled “What I learned from Nelson Mandela,” Varty shares stories of animals, humans and their interrelatedness, or Ubuntu.

As you watch, I invite you to be thinking about what it means to be lost, and to be found, and how your being, humanity and faith are what they are because of your connection to others, to creation, and to God...

Watch TED Talk:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/boyd\\_varty\\_what\\_i\\_learned\\_from\\_nelson\\_mandela?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/boyd_varty_what_i_learned_from_nelson_mandela?language=en)