

The Fallow Way

*“Our Dwelling Place...just a heartbeat
away.”*

Psalm 90:1-2, 14-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8;
Romans 12:1a, 2
November 15, 2020

Theme:

As fall fades and the cusp of winter is near, we now enter a fallow time...in mother nature and, thank you Lord, in our human nature as well.

In nature, the fields lay fallow. Seeds freeze to be cracked open by the seeming cold...making germination possible. Fields go unplanted, covered by the snow. That snow contains the very nitrogen the soil needs for new life to grow. And so the plant roots actively continue to grow, imbibe the richness of the soil...

made possible in fallowness.

And this bears fruit! Literally, in the right timing: spring.

The Fallow Way in our human nature is a time when God invites us to enter into God's ways of enriching ourselves with holy rest and holy restoration...taking in what we most need now...knowing this bears much fruit in our right timing, too...

a conscious time restoring and preparing us as internal seasons of winter and, so then, spring come.

Much that is life-giving goes on beneath this quieted surface. There is a difference between “not doing anything” and “doing no-thing”.

When we embrace the Fallow Way, there is precious work unfolding beneath the surface of things with real consequence.

Rumi says:

Don't think the garden loses its ecstasy in winter. It's quiet, but the roots are down there riotous.

The Fallow Way is a seemingly quiet, riotous way through our loss and grief, exhaustion or exhilaration.

A Holy rest within God's tender care that restores.

So let me ask you:

What is it in your life that so longs for rest? is most tired, weary?

What within you longs to be restored?

Lean into the mystery. Trust. Your roots grow deep.

Lean into the Fallow Way.

Prompting:

God is our dwelling place...

we dwell in the fullness of the promise:

We are never alone. God is with us in all the times of our lives.

In God's steadfast love, we are able to rise and rejoice.

We live each day as God's cared about people.

Paul shares... “So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share our own selves with you, because you have become very dear to us.”

You are dear. And, many are dear to you.

Like those early followers of The Way, we care...others are so dear to us. Each of us is invited to likewise warmly share of our... “self”...as we come alongside each other... especially in these anxious times.

A powerful invitation. Mind you, Paul, even in the dominant patriarchal influence of his time, felt so deeply about those with whom he dwelt that he lifted up the image of a nursing mother to speak to the depth of the bond and love felt...

I feel it, we feel it, too.

It's a deepening care...it's a deep connection one with another.

And gives a special attention to that which is hurting.

God has a special place in God's heart for those hurting.

We each know that hurt and we know the healing power of loving kindness as offered by those long or newly dear to us.

This loving kindness is of God and flows from God to our hearts and minds and souls....and then to others. Deeply connecting us. We are one.

That love...it's not mine, of me. It's not of us.

It's God's love mysteriously weaving a whole creation connection ...beyond what we can understand. Our one dwelling place.

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I see deep connection happening here (our roots entwining) as we greet each other, give safety to each other's stories,
sit and laugh or cry together,
support each other by saying both yes and no to each other...
in kindness.

I see it as we resist judging each other and actually pray for each other...for those with whom we may disagree,
as we recognize our own grumbling and use it for good
rather than to sabotage anyone,

A deep loving connection in the midst of this political-cultural environment ...as we live love and trust and kindness and courage
beyond what we thought we were capable.

Everyone here has had the experience of being bigger and better and more able than they usually are...when you allowed yourself to be connected to the heart of God and connect to someone else's heart felt need...or joy.

Your roots wiggling deep down in the dark, rich soil.

You know the “heart feeling” that happens when you deeply connect to the really, real.

You know the phrase: hurts so good?

Our hearts ache to do “good”. It hurts so good in the heart.

A new meaning to heart “attack”.

***It's not that the heart stops but that it finally starts...
the promised life is always just a heart beat away! Your heart!***

But, how?

How can I keep on keeping on...dwelling in God, sharing and living the gospel...

how can I keep my heart soft enough for God to keep growing it and keep reshaping it as I encounter each new person?

How?

When I live in a world that can be harsh, judging, temperamental?

Where people “talk” about helping rather than do the “help”?

How do I take care of me while I walk with others...

so I can keep on walking?

How did you do that, Paul?

What is the loving kindness needed at home, in my family, my church, my work...my neighborhood, city, county?

And, even if I can figure out what to say or do,

how can I keep it up...maintain my presence,

dwell with them?

~This desire forms my daily prayer...that I can do...be just this.

~I've heard this prayer rise in so many of you.

We pray our real prayers within God's love and mercy. Amen.

Really...how do we keep up being loving and kind and sharing the good news in the face of world that would do its best to prevent it

by busyness, schedules, responsibilities, financial burdens,
high expectations, sabotage, mutiny, stereotypes, prejudice, gossip, faulty assumptions, left
over family guilt?

By a world that would have us be convinced we don't have enough resources to do what is most
needed now.

Wants us to live in the notion of scarcity...
in order to hold us in place, stagnant and defensive,
rather than live deeply from the abundance that is real right now.

How do we be God's people in the real world?

We need a heart "attack"...
a new heart beat and rhythm and alignment.
But how?

Jesus told us how.
Love God and so truly love yourself. Let this form your heart.

And then you are able to tenderly care about and love others.

How often we have that order all wrong.
How often we equate loving God with loving others...
But Jesus teaches (and deeply you know too) we can't really love anyone more tenderly than we
love ourselves...it's not sustainable.

Love ourselves...not our false self, our outer ego or worldly agendas. ...love our precious
created self,
knitted in our mother's womb.

We are made holy and able, able to rediscover our original blessing ...and to do so, we may
need from time to time
to lean into the fallow way to tend our authentic human nature.

We are born with full of self-love.
We are born knowing everything we need to know...
and have spent a life time forgetting it as coaxed by the world.

There are so many times we no don't deeply love ourselves...
Just listen to your self-talk! ...self-doubt, self-shaming.

Yet we go on to try to love others...often in unbalanced and unfulfilling ways. We get ourselves
into trouble.

Burn out, or misjudge, make faulty assumptions,
become disillusioned. Push others away.

But I'm here to tell you, you can find love of self again...

~go fallow and listen to the wind,
~breath in deeply and deeply exhale the crisp fall air,
~sink down into the richness of the fertile ground
in which you are rooted. Take care of yourself.

You can...for you are precious in God's sight and God loves you.

It is not too late to let your roots go deep,
to sprout new insight and a new sense of self that more closely aligns with the love at the center
of your being.

A love of self which so longs to be discovered again.

So stop and take a look at what have you placed at the center of your being right now? It often
points to our real need.

Our need for security and comfort...to feel good about ourselves, to feel we are good, worthy of
a good life, respected, connected to others.

Our common humanity desires to feel loved, tended to...
at peace with life,
rejoicing each morning in a felt experience of belonging.

We do have real physical needs and God wants those needs
to be met. You are to more than just survive!

But, more money or better employment, more family or friends, even health and well-being...if
you get them...

Only make life feel better for a while,

Ultimately outward comforts just postpone our dealing with our deepest need...
that won't be fixed from outside ourselves.

Ultimately, we all want to love ourselves, so we can,
O God Almighty,

be at peace with ourselves and so the world around us.

No one can convince you to "love" yourself and no amount of money or security or even
friends, family, or health
can be substituted for this deep peace.

What each of us really needs is already within...
if we will see ourselves the way God created and sees us.

It is in the depths of our hearts that God meets us and makes all things possible.

In God's love for us felt as a deep belonging and indwelling,
we find a new heart felt rhythm for our lives.

We are to offer tender caring to ourselves as God does the same. Dwell in the heart of
God...place our hearts within God's heart and experience reality in a whole new compassionate
way.

You see, the point is...you can only sustain caring for others in your family or circle of friends,
can only sustain doing good works for the community, accomplishing the tasks at hand...

you can only sustain it just so long
and then you burn out or empty out or get depressed with the overwhelming task/need at hand:
soil depleted.

Don't try...unless you first reach in to then reach out.

Beholding yourself the way God does, honoring your needs and core desires.
And so, see your humanity in the humanity of others:
see the needs and desires of others...

to love them as you love yourself, as Jesus says.

Tenderness, patience, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-
control...

the fruits of the spirit...

offered within are self-sustaining! Enabling.

The way in is the way out.

How can you to start showing tender loving care to yourself
And so embrace your humanity embracing all of humanity?

One sure way: follow nature's lead.

Take nature up on her offer and go fallow first!

Try...coffee breaks with God, resting your mind and your assumptions, shortening your to do
list, giving yourself the benefit of the doubt, removing yourself from toxic situations, saying
no to invasive requests, grumbling less, blaming seldom, prioritizing your day, being outside,
worshipping

and spending time with those who are also
intentionally dwelling in the promise.

Release from your heart-center culture's seduction to live in self-doubt, stinginess, stubbornness, stuckness, staleness, selfishness, sadness.

What can you do to help God jump start your heart? Name one thing you can do right now, today.

Cross over to the promise life of self-worth, self-dignity, self-empowerment, self-love.

Dwell there, go fallow there. Rest there.
Worshipfully work from there.

Go there and find your new heart's rhythm already rooting.
...your mind renewed, your very self...transformed.

For even now, just beneath the surface of your life,
God is already tending to your next new life.
Spring's bounty.

As we go quiet, seemingly doing nothing, our roots are nourished going deep ...preparing us through winter for spring!

Ah, the ecstasy of winter is hope springing eternal.

You have a newly rooted life.
Your roots intertwined with and sustained by our roots.

This season invites us to some fairly straightforward self-examination, holy rest and restoration... invites us into the Fallow Way.

Take the Rest you need for this is holy.

Receive holy rest.
Learn to love the fallow way.