

Welcome What's Next...

"The Heart of Our Relationships!"

Psalms 51: 1-2, 6, 10-12; Jeremiah 31: 31-34;

John 12: 20-32; Psalm 25: 1, 4-5, 9-10

March 18, 2018 Fifth Sunday of Lent

We have no fatal flaws. You can't blame what's going on in your life on some fatal flaw that keeps you from being other than you! You can't blame anyone else either.

It is time to put our focus on our strengths...our resiliencies which are more than coping mechanisms.

Time to dig deep into the insights of our past and lean deeply into trust of self and trust in Divine Energy's life giving plan for us....and so be able to welcome what's next.

That's the heart of the matter!
To welcome what's next with a heart that has space...for more...relationship!
With a spirit that is willing...because you realize...it's not all about you!

God has a dynamic relationship with us!
God is resilient like a good master teacher always willing to try out new teaching methods so you can truly learn

even if it means doing a new thing with you time and time again until you experience that teachable moment and get it!

Jesus is a master teacher...rabboni means teacher!

The entire Jesus story is about taking responsibility to look deeply within, into our hearts, our minds and our motivations.

The stories challenge us to ask: **How resilient am I?**

Which begs the question...am I really willing to go out into the unknown, the darkness?

Is this really to me better than a light and safer than a known way?

Do I live my life in the light of wisdom, put my hand into the hand of God and trust I will make it through and then some?

And as we hear today's wisdom teachings...

(Self-reflective to God...)

~God, you desire truth in my inward being....teach me your wisdom in my secret heart.

You know....teach that part of my heart where I burrow things away...very important things so they, and I,

can stay secret...even though I know keeping secrets.... can be life stopping!

~Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. A heart with room in it for a few new things. And, I really do *know* when my spirit is right on!

~Sustain me in a willing spirit.

Maybe this is the hardest part!

Am I willing to let what is now wisdom held in secret come out into the light and form me anew....sustaining me!

Am I willing to go toward what is difficult and confront the situation...and there....find...my resilient self?

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What is *your* spirit willing to sustain?

What might your spirit be *enabled* to sustain,  
*if* you explored your secret heart....  
your deepest worries and desires....with God?

What might your spirit be enabled to sustain  
*if you let God* meet you in your secret heart  
with truth and wisdom...  
about your real inner and outer life?

Jesus revealed his secret heart to God.

He did not hide his trouble from God,  
but went right to God with it...revealing His secret heart so His spirit would be sustained. And others knew!

He believed/loved and so he could hear God's response to him.

What *might you* hear God say  
to you....if you reveal what's troubling your heart?

It is hardest to hear God...to keep faithing....when our souls are troubled and our lives are in crisis.

We avert, divert, shut down, avoid. Ourselves. Others.

Hard to hear the voice of God even if God is speaking clearly and longs to sustain our spirit giving us a *new* truth.

Often, it's *easier* "to keep faith" when things are going well...*much harder* when they are not.

When things are blooming vs. when they're looming.....  
When we feel rooted and the voices quieting...

What is the heart of the matter here?  
What matters to your heart?  
**How resilient are you?**

Actually, quantum physics and science are leading a discussion that at the center of all matter....  
is heart....a presence...something not random...

Listen to this:  
“Enmeshed in the brain”...*this* is how Dr. Newberg describes God in his book “How God Changes Your Brain”.

Having done all types of brain scans and studies, he asserts that when people engage in prayer,

*that would be reveal their hearts to God and let God into their secret heart.....*

that activity centers in the frontal lobes  
of the brain which govern focus and concentration.

During very deep prayer, the frontal lobes power down...as he says....and a particular affect is achieved.

Pray and meditate enough...  
and some physical changes in the brain  
become permanent....the frontal lobes actually become thicker which boosts memory.

Faith and health do overlap.

Cleansing fasts also affect the brain and produce responses. The ancient notion of Lenten fast is modern science for opening us up to be able to change!

Realizing Ancient Hebrews believed the heart was the center of it all...where thought and feeling merged or emanated...

*your prayer*...what's in your heart *matters* and shapes who you are and how you respond to your world differently....

What you hold in your heart matters and affects your health,

your healing, your well-being.

What's in your....heart?

Not what's in your wallet...that comes and goes anyways, right?  
What's in your heart...that's what matters!

It is the heart of what matters!  
It affects you in very real ways...how you think, feel, act!  
It is key to relationship...integrity and relationship!

Where your treasure is, there will be your heart!

Importantly, how you assess and hold the choices of others is affected by what's in your heart.

Your heart affects how you see others...  
distorts them or brings clarity about them.

We all know our perceptions are often more about us than the other.

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Let's unpack today's psalm written by King David who lost his head as he lost his heart (over Bathsheba) and so he starts off confessing to God...

he was really confessing to himself because, at first...first comes self-awareness...right?
The first step in resiliency.

His self-talk is really on the verge of a pity party.

When things go wrong or we make a mistake in our judgment, don't we also do a whoa-is-me and make our wrong doing bigger than life...

oh...I was born this way, or I'm fatally flawed...
there's no hope for me! It's all beyond me!
At times most of us get stuck right there.

It gets us off the hook for having to do something about the life!

But David goes on...he not only confesses to himself but to God.

He turns toward God and gets a holy consciousness about his own actions and their consequence.

He wants more for his life and is willing to turn his life around...turning toward what matters most....

a right spirit and right relationships....

And in Jeremiah God claims a new covenant.

God's new covenant now internal to all of us...

God doing a new thing...

Wisdom is now in our hearts...

an inward movement of awareness that moves us out into the world differently.

And this new heart of wisdom...this new, clean, spacious heart...can only benefit us if

our spirit willing to try a new thing...a new strategy?

So...given our wisdom teachings...are you aware? Willing?

Is there something going on in your life that gives you pause?

Do you have regret?

Are you stuck in whoa-is-me self-talk...or

are you willing to turn toward God and begin again to live?

What really matters to you?

Are you in pain because of denying it?

How resilient are you?

Hear this again more deeply:

David begins his new life not with some big grand gesture or stroke of insight as to how to right his wrong.

He simply says to God,

I know you desire truth in my inward being...

God, You want me to be honest with myself.

This is where David begins and this is the only place
any of us can ever begin.

And it is enough and we can trust it will bring us forward.

David starts small and quietly.

He asks to be made clean...I would say to be reenergized, for a do-over.

This seems a pretty reasonable way to start over...
small and wise.

...just for himself, not so much for others at first.

And to help him live from this new heart,
he then asks that in the living of his day he may be where he can hear joy and gladness.

Imagine how your mood would change...
your energy be renewed...
and how you might feel differently about your life

if you were living your day within earshot
of joy and gladness?

Imagine what wisdom you might find in your secret heart
if your frame of mind was formed in the presence of gladness and joy instead of
negativity?

David asks God stay close in spirit, put a right spirit within him because his is broken.

He asks God to help him find a willing spirit.

What are you willing to do differently in order to have
your right spirit and find new life?

Ah...here's where Jeremiah comes in.

You see, initially you just may not be able to even see yourself clearly,

let alone want a right spirit, be willing to do anything
differently to mend your heart
or create a new, clean one!

But the heart of the matter is this....
it's not all about you or up to you!

God is able and willing and God does it for you until you are ready to do it for yourself.
God's "I am" holds your "I am".

God has extended to us a new covenant.

It is no longer a two way set-up marked by rainbows or stars or generations...not even about laws on tablets.

God now decrees God is willing to hold up both ends of the agreement until we can hold up our end. Jesus proves it so!

How does God do this?

...by placing within our hearts the wisdom to know and the ability to see clearly and the courage to act...when we are ready.

God will hold up God's end of the bargain forgiving everything and holding our new life for us

as we find the courage to turn our lives toward what matters most...no matter what!

Jesus says...just do it!

The heart of the matter is this: **God loves you.
Love is who you are!**

Whatever has happened to you,
whatever you have done with your life thus far,

God is holding on to a new life for you...your new heart...

No deals or exceptions...everyone gets a new heart!

Get over it...everyone gets a new heart

as God sees clearly everyone's
authentic self which is good!

God is out there in our darkness, ahead of us,
holding out God's hand that we might put ours in God's
and walk in light, go for the new life we say we long to live.

**No matter how long it takes us to reach out to God,
God is already reaching in to us.**

We don't have to start out with some big grand rearranging of the furniture of our lives in order to begin our new life!

You get to start small....quietly....inwardly changing...
until you feel safe enough in this new self...new spirit...
to let your light shine on a new life.

It's easy. It's hard.
It's safe. It's scary.

But the heart of the relationship is that you matter!
You are important to God!

And you are not alone!
God is with you and if you can't feel God with you...
you can see us with you!

Our three readings ask us to reflect, offer us wisdom, and invite us to....just do it!

We are not alone!
This shall be better than a light and safer than a known way!

We are resilient!

I like Lent. It reminds me...
I am capable....

I can welcome what's next.
The good and bad, beautiful and ugly...yes, I can.

~Just like Jesus, I am made able to stand up against what is not right/not just in life.

~And just like Jesus, I can choose an alternative way to think and feel and act....not
alone but in relationship with God and other disciples....

This is the part where I find out who I am!
How resilient I am!
And, I affirm: I can welcome what's next!