

REMAINING CLASS SCHEDULE:

Remaining Classes 4/19, 4/26, 5/3, 5/10.

A. WELCOME & CHECK IN – REFLECTION...

The days gather in the past as we go, with them our memories – sharp or vague as they may be.

So memories hang around, as if in a time-narrative replaying in a rear-view mirror – for a while. Even the best of memories, fade or never really capture all that surrounds the experiences – how could they? But we have among our many exquisite gifts the ability to weave together tethers in the expanding gaps, so the memories cling...even if the narrative changes to keep them present. There is, built in like an LAD*, something that holds the inner story together, important parts stirring an ever-broadening array of settings.

How then do we pass on what is most important to us – to pass on – when the details become “fuzzy” – either from forgetfulness or a new idiom, a colloquialism that is foreign on both sides.

How to tell the story of a recipe, if you never knew the person who created it, whose secret ingredient was, in fact, them?

How to pass on the faith that sustains you? What stories will you tell to pass on what is most important to you?

B. THINK YOU KNOW? “STORIES OF CREATION” – CHAPTER 4, “LIVING THE QUESTIONS”

Think you know the story of creation? Then have a listen to theologian and storyteller Megan Mckenna's version of the story of humanity's beginning:

So God said, “Let there be light.” What’s the light? Consciousness? Understanding? The Jews say it is the soul and the spirit of every human being since the beginning of time to the end. If you know the Jewish tradition every one of us is a shaf or a shard of light that has been shattered, broken and scattered throughout the world. To collect all those and put them together is *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, putting everything back together again the way it should be. So this is literally the creation of every single human being *ever*. That ought to blow your mind for a start. But this is the tradition of the Jews.

The ancient Hebrews who composed what we now know as Genesis were brilliant storytellers—and although their writings have for generations been thought to explain the “how of what happened historically, their stories are much deeper and richer when they are properly understood metaphorically as wrestling with the “whys” of human life.

When we delve into these ancient stories through the practice of thinking theologically, we catch a glimpse of people seeking to answer the eternal question, “What’s the meaning of life?” Their suggestion is a good place to start—that we are made in the image of the Divine, the one who brings order out of chaos and finds joy in the act of creating.

Exercise: What is your eternal question? Or, if you prefer, “What is your BIG QUESTION?”

Exercise: Our Creation Story

C. PSALM 104

Bless Yhwh , my soul!

Yhwh , my God, how great you are!

Clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in a robe of light,
you stretch the heavens out like a tent.

You lay the beams for your palace on the waters above;
you use the clouds as your chariot
and ride on the wings of the wind;
you use the winds as messengers
and fiery flames as attendants.

You fixed the earth on its foundations
so it can never totter,
and wrapped it with the Deep as with a robe,
the waters overtopping the mountains.

At your rebuke the waters bolted,
fleeing at the sound of your thunder,
cascading over the mountains, into the valleys,
down to the reservoir you made for them;
you imposed boundaries they must never cross
so they would never again flood the land.

You set springs gushing in ravines,
running down between the mountains,
supplying water for wild animals
and attracting the thirsty wild donkeys;
the birds of the air make their nests by these waters
and sing among the branches.

From your palace you water the highlands
until the ground is sated
by the fruit of your work;
you make fresh grass grow for cattle
and plants for us to cultivate
to get food from the soil—
wine to cheer our hearts, oil to make our faces shine,
and bread to sustain our life.

The trees of Yhwh drink their fill—
those cedars of Lebanon,
where birds build their nests and,
on the highest branches,
the stork makes its home.

For the wild goats there are the high mountains,
and in the crags the rock badgers hide.
You made the moon to tell the seasons,
and the sun knows when to set:
you bring darkness on, night falls,
and all the forest animals come out—
savage lions roaring for their prey,
claiming their food from God.

The sun rises, they retire,
going back to lie down in their lairs,
and people go out to work, to labor again until evening.
Yhwh , what variety you have created,
arranging everything so wisely!

The earth is filled with your creativity!
There's the vast expanse of the Sea,
teeming with countless creatures,
living things large and small,
with the ships going to and fro
and Leviathan whom you made to frolic there.

All creatures depend on you to feed them at the proper time.
Give it to them—they gather it up.
Open your hand—they are well satisfied.
Hide your face—they are terrified.
Take away their breath—they die and return to dust.

Send back your breath—fresh life begins
and you renew the face of the earth.

Glory forever to Yhwh!

May you find joy in your creation!

You glance at the earth, and it trembles;
you touch the mountains, and they smoke!

I will sing to you all my life,

I will make music for my God as long as I live.

May these reflections of mine give God
as much pleasure as God gives me!

May the corrupt vanish from the earth
and the violent exist no longer!

Bless Yhwh , my soul!

Alleluia!

D. FROM SUNDAY: A PASTORAL PRAYER

"O God of all sea sons and settings of our lives, sometimes our doubts and cynicisms close down like a fog and you seem far removed, leaving us vexed and lost. Then the music rises, the rain falls, rainbows slather on oily puddles, a baby giggles, someone stands for justice, the daily composes its poetry, and the fog lifts along with our spirits and our dreams - so we see again that it's all a gift from you. And our eyes glisten - our voices lift in praise for you.

"O God of all creatures and contexts of your creation, sometimes we feel alone, isolated, cut-off -- of little consequence -- and we find no trace at all of your presence.

"Then a friend calls, a letter arrives, a neighbor knocks, a child visits, and love becomes a word made flesh again, and we remember. So we sense once more that it's all a gift and life becomes a "we" again, an "ours", an "us". And the "You" and "Yours" of it is real again. The Kingdom resonant in our midst. 'Thank you.'

"O God of healing and power, sometimes we feel exhausted, defeated, used up, ready to give up; and you seem altogether elsewhere and indifference. Then a child looks at us through bottomless eyes, asks the forever question, demanding an "honest", for now, answer. And awesome how tremors up our spines levers our minds, and we know anew what this life is all about: You. And hope revived. And not giving into temptation. Being delivered from evil. And the Kingdom, power, and glory forever - and love that never ends."

Transcribed from Video: 4/18/23