

“VACATION FOR THE SOUL”
“Grounded in God: Sown, Rooted, and Harvested”

As we continue our sermon series, “Vacation for the Soul,” This week we venture into the connection we have with the Earth both metaphorically through parables and literally through fasting. These days when I take a vacation, more often than not I take a break to go camping, hiking, hunting, or fishing. These activities are an intentional abandonment of every day convenience with the intention of connecting myself to the natural world. Many times I will pack only water and bare essentials in order to allow my body to feel real hunger and push through the satisfaction of knowing I am not dependent on prepackaged granola bars or bags of trail mix, but am free to let my immediate desires take a back seat to the ultimate purpose of pursuing game, seeing views, or hearing the divine. There is work being done in these moments of which I have no control. To sow ourselves into the divine comes with it an understanding something other than our own self and control will contribute to our growth and transformation. As we meditate on the texts this week, consider the work God can do when we let go of our dependence on immediate convenience, appearances, and things of this world.

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Grounded in God: Sown, Rooted, and Harvested”**

Harvest
by
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*Come winnow from the wheat
Slow winds of all the years,
A few grains of laughter,
A few grains of tears.
What shall we keep? What keep?*

*Intemperate we are,
Forever wanting all:
Soft birdsong in spring-time
Slow leaf-drop in fall;
Moments always – moments all.*

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, June 18, 2018 2 Corinthians 5:11-15

So much of our spiritual formation work is about control. Our desire to control our own lives is forever impeding our personal transformation. The scripture today puts it in terms of being in our “right minds.” We balance our check books or our budgets with a sense of duty and control. We manage our calendar and our schedules with a sense of duty and control. We expect others to make rational, well thought out decisions that will save money, reduce risk, and help us feel safe. Today’s scripture suggests true living in the Spirit can appear to be just the opposite. We are called to be “out of our minds” for God! *Today, what single choice could you make contrary to good reason and logic, all for the sake of living into a love for God? Do that thing.*

Tuesday, June 19, 2018 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

To see as the divine sees would be such a seismic shift in perspective, there would be no turning back. The invitation in this scripture seems to invite us into just this type of shift. Can we see one another as God sees? Can we make all things new by understanding others as redeemed children of God? *Today, before we turn toward a fast from food, try to fast a whole day from human judgement of others. Move away from our daily dismissal and condemnation of others whom we know their shortcomings. Try to see them as new creations in Jesus Christ.*

Wednesday, June 20, 2018 Mark 4:26-29

In so much of our work, the primary thing we desire is control. We want to see the idea form, control the process of incubations, feed the process of growth, and celebration the victory of completion. In divine work, scripture tells us so much of the work is done by someone else, while we were sleeping, beyond our understanding. So much of fasting as a spiritual discipline is giving up control over how you feel. You cannot snack yourself out of “hangry” but instead must give over control and allow your body to move through it. *Today, plan your first experimental fast. It can be short and specific, or long and bold. Before you try anything longer than a day without food, please consult your physician. The primary aim here is to allow your body to feel a lack of control over every moment. Give those moments of uncertainty to God.*

Thursday, June 21, 2018 Mark 4:30-32

Much has been written about the mustard seed. It maybe isn’t actually the smallest seed, nor is the plant actually the largest plant but there seems to be something of the kingdom of God in it all. If you have ever planted a garden from seed, you know there is a great discovery in the growth of plants. The final product can be so beautiful to someone who has toiled over it. It all starts so small, but grows into something wonderful and edible! *Today focus on the food you eat. How much of it comes from a seed and grows to the form you eat it? Strawberries? Tomatoes? Lettuce? What foods do you eat that look nothing like they do at the time of harvest? Could you spend 24 hours only eating food in its raw harvested form?*

Friday, June 22, 2018 Mark 4:33-34

Though these final two verses could read as an after-thought, there is much to be gained in understanding how Jesus taught his disciples. At our convenience is story telling through T.V. and many other media, but how often do we get the writer’s explanation? *Today, read a quality story. If you can find a short story or narrative poem easily read in one setting, then read it and contemplate over it. Consider how many interpretations, lessons, and understandings you could have of this single story. Open your heart to the many ways the Spirit could use this story to move your life.*