

Sunday Wonderings for a Saturday - September 14^h 2024

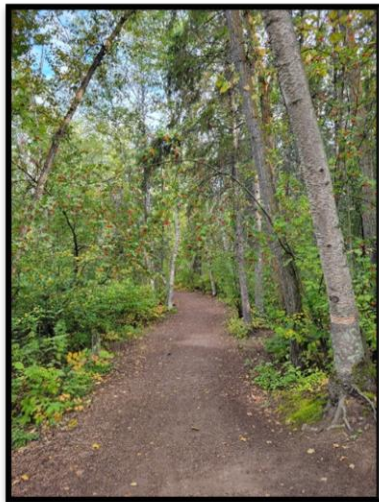
“No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil . . .” only a portion of the words from the Apostle James in his teachings from James 3: 1- 12. This pericope is titled “Taming the Tongue.” Who can tame the tongue James wonders. He writes, in my view, to remind folks to consider the power of what they say. He encourages our speech to be aligned with our confession of faith. If we bless God but curse another, in thought or deed, we are not aligned he offers.

² *For all of us make many mistakes.*

Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is mature” James 3:2

I appreciate James’ honest evaluation. He knows the truth of the matter; even the best of us will make mistakes. Unless one is fully mature; a reference I understand to mean aligned with Christ. For then we are living in our truest nature. But we are a work in progress.

This week on Facebook the administrator for the Evacuees Face Book page reminded us to be kind and gentle to one another. They reminded us that the page was created to help and support us through these hard days of disaster. Frustration and anger were beginning to show up on the page, including some name-calling. Emotions, the rawness of people’s experiences, were spilling over into what was being shared. In trauma recovery language, what folks were experiencing was to be expected. We’re in that space of moving beyond our immediate response and need and the reality of the long road of recovery is becoming more real. Hope and dreams are being met with facts and figures. I was thankful for the administrator’s reminder to be kind to one another, it seemed to help tone down some of the feelings.



I read something this week that resonated with me. We are in a time of limbo – “the state where there are only questions.”¹ More questions than answers, despite everyone's good work in trying to find solutions. Even for those with homes standing, I imagine questions abound for you too. Different questions, perhaps, but still this landscape we are all on is new.

Another word for limbo is liminal – that space between. “Limina in Latin is that space of threshold, the “space betwixt and between.” In this space daily life, and routines, are disrupted. You try to go about your daily life but tomorrow is not yet certain. What we knew and what we believed about ourselves has been shattered and we are forced to examine our life and what we believe. Being in this space is challenging. Not knowing is difficult. But it’s where we find

¹ Wolfelt, Alan. 2014. *Healing Your Grief When Disaster Strikes: 100 Practical Ideas for Coping after a Tornado, Hurricane, Flood, Earthquake, Wildfire, or Other Natural Disaster*. Fort Collins, Colorado: Companion Press, 13.

ourselves and it is “only in liminal space that you can reconstruct your shattered worldview and reemerge as the transformed you that is ready to live and love fully again”².

We are in an in-between time and answers can feel an eternity away. Disappointment and worry can cause fear and anxiety and sometimes the tongue can say something that we wish we hadn't (or share it on Facebook).

James's teaching, while challenging, offers us an important lesson about this human experience. “No human can control the tongue” he offers. Sometimes we say things we wish we didn't. It's our human nature. None of us are yet mature, we are bound to fall short of our desired state.

In our gospel text this week, Jesus asks his disciples who do you say I am. It's our invitation to ask ourselves, who is Jesus for me and what difference does that knowing make? In this space of the liminal, where we are “betwixt and between” how will the love of God be your sure foundation to guide the things, we do and speak? How might we live as the Child of God, the holy loved creation we already are?

Paul reminds us we can do all things in Christ. (Philippians 4:13). In James' words, in Christ, I can learn to practice a kinder gentler tongue and have deep compassion for all when emotions rise to the top and might spill over on Facebook. It seems the FB administrators are sharing the good news! Be kind and gentle they encouraged.

This is a long road we travel together. Let us remember to be kind and gentle to all.

Peace and grace to all.

Rev. Linda McLaren

² Ibid