

GOOD CONNECTIONS, PART II
~ EVOLUTIONARY SPIRITUALITY
Sermon by Karen Hilfman Millson
St. Paul's United Church, Orillia
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“Don't be afraid...”

it's interesting how often that phrase shows up in scripture –
often from the mouths of Angels – “Do not be afraid”.
And yet we also hear another phrase again and again in scripture
that seems to say the opposite ...
rather than do not be afraid – we hear “fear the Lord”...
that phrase has never made sense to me –
it is totally inconsistent with my sense, my experience of God –
in my experience of God – God is always pure love –
why would we fear one who is pure love?

In Bruce Sanguin's book *Darwin, Divinity and the Dance of the Cosmos*—
that we are discussing at Wednesday morning Learning Circle –
Bruce offers a different translation of the Hebrew text
that does make sense to me –
instead of being compelled to “fear the Lord” –
a phrase that often shows up after some amazing description
of God's wondrous creativity ...
instead of fear – in a different translation of the Hebrew –
we are invited to experience awe in our encounters
with the incredible power of God ...
awe rather than fear makes sense to me.

“Don't be afraid – my love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger
and I have promised, promised to be always near.”

That promise that comes to us from God –
through Jesus and the prophets and the poets and our heart of hearts ...
that promise that God will always be near –
that God's love is stronger even than our fear
resonates with a place deep within us ...
though the reassurance can quickly fade away when our ego jumps in –
ambushing those words of assurance
with the very thing that God's love is stronger than – fear ...
though God's love is stronger than fear ...
that fear can hook us and play havoc in the moments of our lives ...
connecting into our personal and ancient wounds that we carry within us –
wounds that we are “not-good-enough”, that we are unworthy,
that we are alone, that we are bad, or that we are unloveable.

Connecting into those fears and letting them have the driver's seat in our lives means we will be driven by our woundedness, by our fears. The question that is worth asking ourselves is – do we have a choice about this?

In our readings this morning we hear the words of Moses that we heard last week –
“I set before you this day” –
Moses said as the Israelites were about to enter the “Promised Land” –
the land of milk and honey –
“I set before you this day life and death – Choose Life!”

But do we really have the power to choose –
and if so – how do we connect to that power?
Again last week, I talked briefly about the new story that is informing our understanding of life –
the unfolding Universe Story that tells us that all that is –
came into being 13.7 billion years ago in one moment of explosion of light ...
and since that moment the universe has been constantly evolving.

We are part of that evolving –
and so we have the power of evolution –
the power to evolve beyond the way things are now –
to something greater.

In the Gospel of John we read that Jesus said that we will do even greater things than he did because we are connected to the power of the Spirit. This one who said “I am the light of the world” tells us to let our light shine –
to not let our light be hid under a bushel basket or under the pile of fears that accumulate around the light of love that is within us –
Let your light shine – which gives glory to God.

We will do even greater things than Jesus did because of our connection to the Spirit.
Do you ever feel as though that seems like a great idea –
but not totally sure how to make that connection?
For some of us, in some moments of our lives it might feel like our connection to that higher power, that higher consciousness, that Spirit Guidance is a little fuzzy or breaking up like a cell phone that doesn't have enough bars to connect well –
without much hope of us making a clear or good connection.
For others or in other moments of our life it may be that that connection seems pretty clear –
a good connection.

In the tele-seminar course that I am doing right now –
I have met a person whose insights have been helpful to me around this whole topic.

Tanis Day is her name.

She is the author of a book called “The Whole You”
in which she talks about becoming conscious enough
to be aware of how we can connect to energy fields that stretch out beyond us –
that connect us to the Spirit, to higher consciousness, to unconditional love.

I was on the phone with Tanis yesterday –
asking her to summarize her insights
so that I could share them in the context of this morning’s sermon.

So this is what Tanis described:
she suggests that we are made up of a series of energy fields –
the smaller fields are nested inside of the larger energy fields –
something like those dolls where you start with a small doll
which is enclosed by a doll slightly larger which is enclosed by a doll larger again.

So all these energy fields are in us.
The smallest energy field is also the one that is the most dense.

It is our personality level –
our physical body,
our emotional body that encompasses our emotions,
and our mental body – where we create a recording
of everything that happens to us
and all our interpretations of those events.
When we rest in this field of energy
we experience ourselves to be individuals who are separated from others,
leading an isolated existence.

Then there is an intermediate field
which can be described as the human soul.
The human soul is a field that we all share –
where we are all connected –
which goes back to the beginnings of human history
and the stories of our ancestors.
In this level or field of consciousness
we carry the collection of the past –
both the good and the bad –
everything we humans have done –
the shame and the beliefs, the core fears,
from the perspective of both victim and perpetrator.

When we talk about the authentic self –
Tanis suggests that the authentic self is a higher consciousness
or awareness within our personality and soul.
When our souls are incarnated or embodied –
we bring with us particular qualities that are unique to us –
we see them in babies from the time they are born.
As we grow we begin to discover what our authentic quality is
that we are to share through our living –
it could be adventuring, seeking, musical,

connecting to the land as a farmer,
some are driven by thinking.

When we feel like we are living in our authentic self
it means that we are really honouring who we are –
we become good ambassadors of the soul
when we live our talents and passions –
and we end up feeling alive and engaged.

The energy field of our soul is all around us, stretching out to about our arms' length.

But there's another field of energy
that is also part of who we are –
and that's the Higher Self, the Spirit, the Unity of Consciousness –
and it's energy field is out beyond our arms' reach.
It's a big field of energy that we find beyond us,
yet also at the very core of our being.
Tanis describes connecting to it as:
aligning with the moral consciousness of the universe.

She led me in a meditation
that is actually very similar to the meditations that I lead –
but instead of going down into the center of our being –
she invites us to go out and beyond ourselves –
to take our point of consciousness out the top of our head –
out our crown chakra –
until we connect to that wonderful peaceful experience of floating –
and then push beyond that to a place where we encounter presence ...
a presence that is unconditional love –
that longs to guide us into the fullness of life –
the presence of God, of Spirit, of higher guides –
a presence that is love.

- In this level of consciousness –
wisdom does not get denied by ego –
we can hear and know the truth of the wisdom:
- choose life
 - let your light shine
- do not be afraid – love is stronger than fear and I have always promised to be there
- the lion will lie down with the lamb and a little child will lead us.

Those energy fields are all a part of who we are – and yet –
one of the real tragedies Tanis suggests and I agree –
is that a high percentage of people
hang out in the personality level of their beings –
in their minds – where we feel the most isolated
and connect only to our own life experiences and learnings –
which is our smallest self –
yet that's where we tend to hang out most of the time.

It's like we live in a giant mansion filled with beauty and awe,
with wings going off in every direction and turrets that reach to the sky ...
and we hang out in the basement kitchen all the time.

It would be wise as human being to imagine ourselves
hopping onto a central elevator in this mansion that is our self –
and to experience the feeling of the elevator
taking us up to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th floors
so that we experience what's going on up there.

It was Albert Einstein who said that
“no problem can be solved
from the same level of consciousness that created it”.

So it is imperative that we practice going to those energy fields,
to those places that are part of us,
that connect us to our higher power,
to the Spirit that empowers us,
to God who is love –
to the wisdom that will lead us beyond our current reality.

It is from that place of higher consciousness,
it is from that place of love
that we are going to figure out
what we are already figuring out in small ways
.....how to live as part of this earth community
in such a way that we honour all other parts of this earth community.

We need that higher consciousness to figure out
how to deal with huge problems
like the oil that is continuously pouring in to the Gulf of Mexico
and the magnitude of the problems that it is causing
and will cause by its impact
on the water and creatures of the earth's ocean.

As Einstein also said –
“it is insanity to do the same thing over and over again
and expect different results”.

So will we change this time?
Will we begin to be open to the creativity
that will take us beyond dependence on oil?

I have been intrigued by how much this situation
of the oil in the Gulf has propelled people into action.
I don't ever remember receiving so many e-mails and letters
that all target the same concern:
that weave together the outcry and encouragement
to protest with the encouragement to pray.
E-mail after e-mail have come to sign petitions and write letters

and in equal numbers there have been requests for global prayers –
including from the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers,
and from an elder I met years ago in Timmins
at an Eagle and Condor Symposium
where we reflected on the prophecy of the indigenous people –
that the time is fast coming when we need to ensure
that the Eagle and the Condor fly together in one sky –
the eagle which represents intellectual power and progress,
and the condor that represents the power of the heart and Spirit
and connection to the land.

The Isaiah vision of our tradition is clear –
that the time will come when swords are beat into ploughshares
and the lamb and the lion will lie down together.

May we be open to the power of the Spirit,
the power of eternal love that is part of our very being –
so that we may be channels for the coming of that peace.

Let it be so.
Amen

Sung Response:

*“Come Spirit come,
our hearts control
our spirits long to be made whole
Let inward love guide every deed
by this we worship and are freed.”*