

Easter Wednesday, 2020 (adapted from Easter Sunday, 2017)

You look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly. This is the 7th verse of Psalm 51. We prayed this Psalm together on Ash Wednesday; also Friday evening in the first week of Lent, and Holy Monday morning. *You look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.*

What is your deep truth? It is tempting to give a churchy answer: “I am a child of God,” “I am a redeemed sinner.” As true as such statements are, let’s look at it another way. Let’s assume the deep truth about ourselves is not a conscious thought, or definition. Assume everyone’s deepest truth is something that ‘comes out;’ that deep truth is the central core of personhood, defining, informing and motivating everything you do, say and think. Accept that how you live, reveals your deep truth. What motivates, excites, fills you? What can you not get enough of? What is most important? How do you treat others, yourself? What most occupies your time and energy? As you truly study yourself you begin to see your deeper. Yet even at this level what you notice is more like weather that swirls around a great mountain; we pay a lot of attention to what churns around and in us, and it is true, but it is not the deepest truth.

Our society hates self-awareness because the deep truth in people cannot be marketed, manipulated or exploited (although some try). Indeed, deep truth is the cure for greed, lust, envy, gluttony, pride, vengeance, violence and everything else that dehumanizes and destroys personhood. The deep truth makes us human, makes us who we are, no matter that we can be blind to the reality. I said a moment ago that what we are usually aware of in ourselves is like the changing weather around a mountain, but you are not the weather; you are not the relentless storms of emotion and restless thought; you are the mountain. Psalm 125:1 testifies: *Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but stands fast forever.* It is by surrendering the emotional tempest and downpour of thoughts, swirling around and through us, that allows the sacred within gradually to reveal itself as a simple, fundamental fact: we are already treasured by God, we already are held in God’s love, already surrounded with God’s eternal loving-kindness. Again, from Psalm 125: *The hills stand about Jerusalem; so does the Lord stand round about his people, from this time forth for evermore (v. 2).*

Our prayers, worship, works of mercy, study, common life, our silence is meant to reveal the truth: God is to us as water is to a fish, as air is to a bird; we swim in God, we fly in God with every breath. As Paul puts it, in God *we live and move and have our being* (Acts 17:28); from Colossians: *...your life is hidden with Christ in God* (2b). The problem of sin is not that we force God to abandon us (ridiculous!); in sin we forget what we are. Assuming the storms that batter us are life’s deepest truth we try to be our own god, believing the absurdity that if we just had the right knowledge, luck or strength, enough money or prestige or possessions we could be happy. St. Augustine, after years of searching for the truth, finally surrendered to Jesus. He came to the realization that God is “closer to me than I am to myself...O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, you were within and I was outside myself” (Confessions, III.6, X.27). A thousand years later the anonymous writer of *The Cloud of Unknowing* wrote, “God is your being, and what you are, you are in God.”

Our mission to the world is not to convince anyone that a man executed 2000 years ago miraculously came back to life. We are to live the truth of God’s love for everyone and God’s always-presence with everyone, revealed in Jesus. We are to live the truth that God is already in us, with us, around us; we are all immersed in God; that the struggle is not to find this God, but to surrender our puny, pathetic attempts at being our own gods, and give our lives, our selves day by day, moment by moment to this glorious God who loves us with the fullness of his own infinite, eternal Being, revealed in Jesus, who at the right time died for us while we are still sinners, who became as we are so that we may become what he is, who rose victorious to lift us all out of death into eternal life. This is the truth deep within us all. Amen.