

Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Sept 23, 2018

**How Does God Restore Our Souls? – Call/Rebellion
(Psalm 100)**



**Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
(Ps 100:1)**

A lesson from the psalm

I'm not sure how many of you have seen one of favourite t-shirts – I bought it in the market in New Orleans – 'Music washes the soul and nourishes life' – the 100th psalm is another way of saying that – and it adds a lot of theological depth to that statement – the Christian way of understanding 'soul' and 'life' are crucial to our take on this fascinating idea – our souls are not simply things or objects – they are hard to describe in language, especially in language that is confined by our old understandings of space and time – but good science is constantly reimagining how the world really works – I don't pretend to understand it – I'm really seeing through a glass dimly here – but I think it points to energy being the core of all that exists – and our psalm this morning points to God's energy of love being the core of all life – so, our souls sense and shape the significance of that loving energy for our life – and there is an attractive power in music that moves us at deeper levels than words alone – resonating with the energy that is the essence of our being – that's what makes this psalm such a powerful expression of our faith – it's about the dynamics of how God's love infuses and inspires our souls and binds them together into a commonwealth of gladness

Provocative points to ponder

- This is what happens when we find our true home in Jesus Christ – when we enter into his body, the church, as the primary presence of God in the world – not the only presence, but the space/time where God is encountered most clearly and most fully – a dynamic in which we are awakened to the realization that God has brought us back into our true home and freed us for the full life promised in creation – we are being called by God to companionship in the community that is cultivating creation –
- The psalm is filled with these active invitations from God – come and do this with me - 'enter,' 'give thanks,' 'make,' 'worship,' 'know,' – this is the call of God to grow into everything God wants us to be – and that blessed being is interconnected with all of God's creation – the rugged individualism that is so celebrated in popular culture in Western society, and that infects so much of the church these days, is simply a gross distortion of God's intent – we are created for community – within God, with others, and in sync with our souls' deepest wisdom – in this call to sing lies the integration of the instincts, emotions, and intellects (what I think the word 'soul' points to) of all the peoples that dwell on the earth – that is the mission that brings true gladness into the whole world

- But over the ages, with generation compounding the impact of generation, we have rebelled against this call – we have arrogantly assumed that we can figure out good and evil and be our own gods – we can imagine and create well-being without reference to anything else – well, how's that working for us these days? – seriously! – deep in our collective soul, we know this is not the way things are supposed to be – our souls need to be washed from this sin – our lives need to be nourished and be nourishing
- That's what came to mind when I found this image for this morning – a cross, the instrument of a torturous death that authorities who thought they were God (the political powers) or knew exactly what God wanted (the religious powers) used to try and get rid of Jesus – but God, with the steadfast love that endures forever, turned the cross they used into an instrument of a reconciled life for the whole of creation – so, our song of gladness flows through and from that empty cross – such singing, however it may enfold you, restores your soul to its awareness of participating in the energy of God's love

Finding this in God's living Word, Jesus Christ

- Here's a way of 'singing' the flow of God's steadfast love that endures forever – there's that 'soulworm' again - from the sadness of suffering, to the surprise of salvation, to the significance of service - from the sadness of suffering, to the surprise of salvation, to the significance of service - from the sadness of suffering, to the surprise of salvation, to the significance of service – may we be filled with that song as we move through our lives

Your Notes

Prayers of the people offering thanks, seeking help, and being awed

*[The form and flow of thanks, help, and awe is taken from Anne Lamott's wonderful little book on prayer, **Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers** (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012).]*