

**Brian's Sermon Text for Sunday Worshiping at Brentwood  
Sunday, Sept 27, 2020**

**The Soul of It All  
(Psalm 25:1-9 and 1 Corinthians 13:1-13)**

**Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;  
and the greatest of these is love.  
(1 Cor 13:13)**



**Word to Ponder = Soul**

**Congregational Wisdom = inner being, everlasting, true self, beyond partial, limited physical, the real self that God intends, what we take with us when we cross over, core of reality/being as a manifestation of God's mind, outside of time and space, how God speaks to us, divine energy, repository, Nina Simone/ Mahalia Jackson/Martin Luther King Jr, God working in us**

In the conversation I had with God this morning,  
who I see these days primarily as Family,  
my soul was drawn to the chronic stress injuries  
being inflicted by the persistence of the pandemic.

I sense that many have gone into a protective numbness  
in the face of the overwhelming impact this virus is having.

According to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Centre this morning,  
we're fast approaching 33 million cases world-wide  
and 1 million deaths.

Roughly 20% of cases and deaths are in the US.  
Cases in Canada's most populous regions are growing.

It's not just the disease itself.  
It's the disruptions to our ways of life it is imposing,  
disruptions in every dimension of our lives.  
I don't know all the disruptions you are facing.  
I imagine they are distressing and draining,  
often in ways that surprise and startle.

I'll read the prayer I wrote this morning  
and trust that it may resonate somehow with your souls.

*How does resilience find us, dear Family?  
In the face of the chronic multitude of stress injuries  
that are inflicted on us and that we inflict on others,  
how do you reach us with your faith, hope, and love?*

*It struck me as I was pondering this morning  
that we so often word it so wrongly.*

*In the midst of our pain,  
**we** seek resilience.*

***We** engage in a stressed search  
for connections, possibilities, purpose,  
adaptation, self-understanding, perspective,  
positivity, and self-care.*

*In that stress, **we** think **we** are on our own,  
having to initiate our own way out of the morass,  
urged on by the insistent gurus of self-help.*

*But **we** are not the spark and source of resilience.  
You are.*

*Your resilience seeks out and embraces us  
with a depth of faith, hope, and love  
that awakens and astounds us in unimaginable ways.*

*But once we have accepted the redemption you offer,  
we see our chronic stress injuries as paths to healing  
for ourselves and others.*

*Your ways of healing are often startling and shocking  
because you heal us into your ways, not ours.*

*Awaken us ever more deeply to the gifts and risks of **your** resilience.*

There is no better summary of the resilience  
that the Creator offers in Jesus Christ through the illumination of the Spirit  
than the 13<sup>th</sup> verse of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians.

Everything, and I mean everything, gets resolved  
by God's faith, hope, and love.  
Not by ours, but by God's.

This is the soul of it all – God's faith in us,  
the hope that arises from that dignity and worth,  
the love that flows to care for all creation from that gift.

It is a gift of resilience,  
of the ability to return to our original form as God's presence in the world,  
to recover from the distortions to that calling  
that our stress injuries have inflicted.

The Corinthian church confronted a different set of stresses than ours,  
no less real and disruptive  
to their vocation as ambassadors of the Creator's kin-dom,  
just different.

But God's resilience offered the same strength for healing,  
for putting things together again in new ways, in God's ways,  
shaped by God's desires for justice, kindness, and humility.

We are assured by Paul over and over again,  
to make sure that we have heard the soul of it all in multiple ways,  
that the gift we have received through Christ will save us  
into showing up in all our circles of inspiration and influence  
as ambassadors of God's forgiving and reconciling love.

## My Notes



## My Prayers

### Prayers of the People

Assure us deep in our souls that you have heard these prayers  
spoken aloud into this worshiping or quietly within.

And hear these common prayers this morning:  
for those whose lives have been disrupted by this pandemic;  
for those who grieve the passing of a loved one  
who was an intimate presence of your faith, hope, and love  
in their lives;  
for those confronting illnesses that threatened their earthly lives;  
for those who make decisions that shape our living together;  
for those who witness to your love by their with-ness for others;  
for the visions we have for enhancing our space  
so you can embrace people ever more powerfully with your love.

And help us hear again the comfort and challenge, the gift and risk,  
of your prayer that has inspired your people for generations:

[singing of the Lord's Prayer]