

Psalm 36: 5-9

⁵ Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

⁶ Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgements are like the great deep;
you make whole humans and animals alike, O LORD.

⁷ How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

⁹ For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

Imagine if much of what you did in your daily life was meditation and prayer. By that I don't mean you set aside chunks of your day to meditate and pray. Rather, I mean integrating much of what you do as meditation and prayer. What would that look like? The psalmist is meditating on the 'steadfast love' of God, and God's 'righteousness' and justice (which they*** call 'judgements' here). The psalmist is filled with gratitude, awe and wonder. How does this come to be?

The psalmist is out in nature and sees God everywhere surrounding them. They look above and see the heavens and the clouds. They contemplate their vastness and then meditate on the vastness of God's steadfast love and faithfulness (5). They behold the 'mighty mountains' and ponder the mightiness of God's righteousness. They give thanks for the sustenance of the land and reflect on how God sustains and makes whole (6) humans and animals alike, even providing an abundant 'feast' (8).

They look up and see an eagle flying majestically and those great wings fill the psalmist with assurance that God is a refuge (7) through any time of trouble. As they continue walking they come by a river and a fountain and as they drink till their thirst is quenched, they give thanks for how God fills them with delight (8) in the refreshment of love deep in their heart, overflowing outward. As the sun shines upon the psalmist providing warmth and light they offer up a prayer of thanks for the gift that is light (9).

Now, maybe the psalmist doesn't experience all this at once. But clearly, the psalmist has experienced a lot of God's vivid presence in the natural world around them. How much do we experience God in the world around us? Or do our eyes get blurry as we go from one thing to the next preoccupied, stressed and disconnected from the world around us?

Of the many things Covid has introduced into our experience of life, one of the big ones besides fear is disconnection and disorientation. In our isolation or limited sphere of embodied connections, we are disoriented from life as it has been and could be. Sometimes, a shakeup is important as an invitation to re-evaluate what our lives are

about and what we should be doing with them. Other times, we just get scared, bored, lost or depressed. But if we follow something of what this psalm may inspire us to do, we may take a walk outside (as many of us are doing these days) and take the time to ponder everything we see as a prayer and meditation, anticipating God speaking to us through all we may have eyes to see.

If you do try this (or, like the psalmist, you've already done this), let me know how you experience God present in and around you.

PRAYER: You are everywhere, O Ground of our being. You are here with us, with me now, a fountain of love. Quench my thirst. Fill me with assurance that you carry me whatever I live and whatever I go through. Give me patience and grace with the people around me. Give me discernment in my choices and wisdom in my decisions. Give me eyes to behold your beauty, even when it is easier to see the ugliness. Give me grace to see what is good and right even when it is easier to see the bad and the wrong. I ask this in and through the power and energy that is your being, flowing through Jesus and into my heart as Holy Spirit; Amen.

*** I'm using "they, their, them" as pronouns for the psalmist to be gender inclusive. If you're not sure why this is important, please ask me: hathan1964@hotmail.com.