

Reflection for December 7, 2025 – “The Vision”

Inspired by Isaiah 11:1-10

FROM OUR VERY first breath, we are in relationship. With that indrawn draft of air, we become joined to everything that ever was, is and ever will be. When we exhale, we forge that relationship by virtue of the act of living. Our breath comesingles with all breath, and we are a part of everything. That's the simple fact of things. We are born into a state of relationship, and our ceremonies and rituals are guides to lead us deeper into that relationship with all things. Big lesson? Relationships never end; they just change. In believing that, lies the freedom to carry compassion, empathy, love, kindness and respect into and through whatever changes. We are made more by that practice.¹

That beautiful poetry is from Ojibway Richard Wagamese's book called Embers. Richard was passionate about relationships. In his work on indigenous reconciliation, he proclaimed that the first step to healing was to get to know your neighbour. He would condemn prejudging, hanging on to grudges and basing opinions on hearsay. He was an advocate for working to understand differences and believed in healing through forgiveness.

Richard would have related to the passage from Isaiah we heard this morning. Wolves sleeping with lambs, leopards sleeping with kids, calves and lions eating together. Cows and bears grazing in the same pasture and lions eating straw. Nursing children crawling over rattlesnake dens and toddlers placing their hands in the dens of serpents. I would love to have him comment on Isaiah. I can imagine him saying, “of course, that is as the Creator saw it.” I have little doubt that Richard would see this passage as a metaphor for peace and harmony, for how all relationships should be based.

That is how I see it. A vision God the Creator had in the very beginning. A vision God through Isaiah had, a vision God through us has this day. A vision where Palestinian and Jew can sit side by side at a common table sharing a refreshing drink of Jallab. A vision where a Muslim woman wears a Hijab because she wants to, not because she is forced to. A vision where there is really “free trade,” not trade based on coercion, favouritism, manipulation or economic gain. A vision where refugees are welcomed with open arms. A vision where a gay or lesbian person can live openly without fear of imprisonment or other reprisal. A vision where food relief gets to the people in need rather than sold to profiteers. In that vision relationships are fundamentally based on mutuality and trust.

An unlikely, if not impossible vision. The wolf and the lamb laying downside by side? A child playing next to a snake pit? Unless this was a creation of an AI app on your phone or computer, that is not something we are likely to witness anytime soon. But unlikely or not, that was Isaiah's vision. Symbiotic relationships. Harmonious relationships.

Like some of the other biblical prophets and some of the Psalmists, there was certainty that one day the Messiah would come to renew God's promise of peace, security and justice among all nations. To build loving relationships among all people.

Isaiah refers to a “shoot sprouting from Jesse's stump, from his roots a building branch.”² Jesse was King David's son. Jesus family lineage is said to have descended from King David. And so, Isaiah in fact is referring to the coming of Jesus in his prophesy. This new “King of the Jews,” who

***won't judge by appearances,
won't decide on the basis of hearsay.
He'll judge the needy by what is right,
render decisions on earth's poor with justice.***

¹ Richard Wagamese, Embers, One Ojibway's Meditations, Douglas and McIntyre, P.O. Box 219, Madeira Park, BC, Canada, 2016, p. 44

² The Message Bible, Isaiah 11 Vs. 1

***His words will bring everyone to awed attention.
A mere breath from his lips will topple the wicked.
Each morning he'll pull on sturdy work clothes and boots,
and build righteousness and faithfulness in the land.³***

I can visualize a modern-day Jesus getting up each morning and putting on a T-shirt and blue jeans, and perhaps one of those plaid long sleeve work shirts. I can see him stepping into some well-worn work boots as he prepares to hit the road. He jumps into a battered old Ford 150 that rattles up the road spewing blue smoke out the exhaust as he heads out for the day. But like the Jesus we know, this carpenter's impact will not be measured by how many nails he has hammered into 2x4's or how many coats of paint he has applied to walls. It will be by the just and fair work completed and in the building of honesty and integrity through relationships. Because that is God's vision. Isn't it all really about relationship?

Be assured, Isaiah proclaims that the wickedness in our time will be righted, and as we heard Phyllis read, ***"the whole earth will be brimming with knowing God-Alive, a living knowledge of God ocean-deep, ocean-wide."*** And knowing God alive is being in open, caring, honest relationships with others.

While Jesus was known as a healer, an advocate for peace, and a justice seeker, his real vision was that of building loving relationships. These would be relationships built on listening and honouring differences. Relationships which would put personal agendas and egos on the back burner. Relationships where forgiveness is given when it is needed. Relationships where retribution is not a "go to" option.

Some of you might remember the 1978 hit single by the Cooper Brothers, especially the chorus. (Most of us of the older generation should). I'd like to play a bit of it for you.

Today it seems like Isaiah's prophesy, God's vision, Jesus' hope for relationship building is just a dream. But

The dream never dies just the dreamer.
The dream never dies if its strong
The song never dies just the singer
So come on everybody, sing along.

Sing along with the creator in the quest for a new world order. Walk with Jesus together to build caring, nurturing and loving relationships. That's the vision. One that will never die as long as we believe in it.

Thanks for listening this morning, Amen

³ Isaiah 11.