

Remember me: Re-membered by creation's song
Psalm 19.1-10; Isaiah 50.5

The heavens declare the glory of God....
Every night [creation] reveals knowledge....
Without speech, without a word...
their line goes out through all the earth....

“The heavens declare the glory of God....”

“Every day it utters speech....”

I don't know about you, but when I hear this psalm, I have a sense that the psalmist can't quite find words big enough or expressive enough to hold his claim...his truth...his profound knowing that creation is proclaiming God's word. From the farthest reaches of the cosmos, through the turning of the seasons, from noon to midnight...all of it...all of it declaring God's glory. Creation isn't just *revealing* God's glory: it is *speaking* it!

Do we hear it?

“The heavens are telling.... Day to day it utters speech....”

In this psalm, the poet recalls the Genesis 1 story. Every day God spoke a word. And that word created a new world. With this psalm we understand that not only did God's daily words create and fill the cosmos, but that the created world was bursting with God's word: “Every day it utters speech, every night it reveals knowledge.”

Do we hear it?

This is a familiar psalm for many of us. I've heard it many times. Yet listening to it this week I had a sense of hearing it for the first time. More precisely, for the first time I understood that it is *biblical* to listen to creation. That it is biblical to listen to trees and grasses, to sky and birds. I learned to listen to creation, especially to trees, from people outside of the Christian tradition, more recently from Robin Wall Kimmerer

and other indigenous writers. I've felt somewhat secretive about doing so, that it was somehow not "Christian." Yet here...here are these ancient words from our Bible, "The heavens are telling the glory of God...their voice goes out through all the earth."

Why haven't I heard this before? Why weren't we taught this in Sunday school? What have we been missing by not listening to creation?

And then an answer came.

There are followers of Jesus through the ages who *have* been listening. Such as Hildegard of Bingen. And Saint Francis. But when the Christian Church in Europe sent people out to find and conquer new lands, they couldn't accomplish their mission while listening to the chorus of creation singing God's glory. Their theology had to change. Because you can't possess the land when you know that the land and everything on it and in it is declaring God's glory.

So the theology was reformed...it was de-formed to accommodate the Church's desire to possess new lands...deformed so it could hold the desire and mission to conquer and dominate and possess God's creation. The new theology erased God's word from creation and placed it within the confines of a printed book that we know as our Bible. Of course you can't stop the heavens from declaring the glory of God. But you *can* teach people to stop listening.

And that's precisely what happened. The Church closed its ears to God's Word in creation. To justify its violence and the dis-membering necessary to possess new lands, the Church needed a theology that was blind and deaf to the song of creation...a theology that excluded the humanity and goodness of indigenous peoples and their religions. We know this terrible, terrible history. Even within the church, ancient traditions and practices that turned to the created world for wisdom and collaboration,

such as midwifery and healing, were treated as threats by the Church...and practitioners were burned as witches.

“Every day [creation] utters speech...every night it reveals knowledge.”

“The heavens are telling the glory of God.”

Are we listening?

Many of us have been formed by this theology that separates us off from our *belonging* within creation. We've been dis-membered from our siblings in creation. Instead, we were formed by a theology that told us *we* were the crown of creation. We were taught an inflated value of our own words and voices. One of the things that is so unfortunate about this theology is its false reliance on spoken words. This de-formed theology has taught us that the right words in worship are the ones that matter. Yet the speech the psalmist is praising has no sound. It has no words. The speech...the communication...the declaration is in the *being*. If we're relying on our spoken declaration of God's glory in worship, surely the psalmist is compelling us to reconsider. If creation is pouring forth speech and knowledge...without a spoken word or sound...let us reconsider our theology. And reconsider the relationship between our speech and our lived lives.

Does my *being* declare God's glory? If we had no words, if our words made no sounds, would our lives be declaring God's glory? From sunrise to sunset and in all the space and time in between, would our lives be declaring God's glory?

pause

This question, while a hard one, at the same time points us toward good news.

The hard part is that we're living in a time that has so many...so very many words. Many of the words are good. So it may be hard for us to turn away from our words in

order to listen to and hear the words and voices of creation all around us. In all the good and chaos of so many words, Psalm 19 is surely an invitation to turn away from human words and turn toward God's Word that's being uttered by creation.

The verse from Isaiah offers us a daily practice: "Morning by morning [GOD] wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught." This passage is especially striking when it's read alongside Psalm 19. For someone who was given the tongue of a teacher, they're acknowledging God for opening their ears to listen. This person with a God-given gift as a teacher understands the value of listening. To listen as ones who have been taught forms within us the capacity to utter God's glory...not with our speaking...but with our *being*.

Are we willing to listen as ones who have been taught?

Surely God has been opening our ears here at FoH. We may not quite know how to listen to creation, but we have shown ourselves willing to learn. Our willingness to sit at the feet of our tree siblings...our practice of listening to creation around us...what is visible, what is heard, is that this is a community willing to listen as ones who have been taught.

Pause

May God our Creator open our ears to hear the Word of God that creation is speaking as we sit with our siblings in creation....

May the Crucified/Resurrected Christ show us the ways our lives *are* telling the glory of God...and reveal to us the ways in which are lives are *not* telling God's glory....

May the Holy Spirit of God be our Defender...silencing our tongues so that we are free to listen as ones who have been taught by the glorious aliveness of the Resurrection Garden.

May we be re-membered with all of creation...and experience healing as we find ourselves *belonging* and at home with creation, hearing in full volume the goodness and beauty and love of God's word and wisdom written into the world around us...

May it be so....