

## **November 1, 2020 (Focus: Revelation 21: 10, 22-22:5)**

How is it with you? If you are anything like the people I talk with, and well, me too, you are tired, angry, worried, anxious, and, well, holding your breath, metaphorically at least. There is a lot of uncertainty about an event in a few days, and I don't mean whether there will be enough guacamole for Taco Tuesday. A lot hinges on what happens in this election, and when the results will be known, and sadly and maddeningly whether it will be an election or a coup.

So right now, for now, and for the next few days or weeks or whatever it takes to know the results...breathe...just breathe. All of our feelings, whatever they may be, are warranted in these crazy times. Feel them, yes. But also, breathe. Just breathe.

And listen to some wisdom from the ages. Our scripture reading from Revelation always reminds me of another scripture passage that takes us beside a body of water, that reminds us that that Good Shepherd leads us beside still waters, to restore our soul. Those still waters are about restoring us, renewing us, refreshing us, and those are waters we surely need.

The waters that we find ourselves beside in the Revelation passage are a river that flows from God, waters that flow through the city that cause a mighty harvest to come forth from the earth, that lead to the healing of the nations. These are active waters, doing God's active saving work in the world, for the good of all God's creation.

We need both waters, still living waters that give us rest and raise up our souls, and flowing waters that raise up all life. God intends both for us, spiritual and bodily sustenance. God intends for us life, and not brutish and hard life for some, but life of blessing for all. Blessed are the meek, the peacemakers, the poor; this earth is for them too, Jesus said. The living waters are for everyone who seeks them, Jesus told the woman at the well. God intends abundant joy, Jesus in effect said when he changed that water into wine.

We forget this, in the face of other evidence, evidence that says that the rich get richer, that only those loyal to earthly powers should be rewarded or protected. But the truth is known by the company of saints in the light across the ages: God intends good for God's people. We don't have God's timetable for such intentions, and that frustrates us. We don't have God's design for the future, and that worries us. And then we remember Sarah, laughing at God when God told she at her advanced age that she would bear a child and would become the

mother of a huge nation. In the face of evidence to the contrary, Sarah laughed at God's ridiculous plan of abundant blessings, yet it happened. Inexplicably and incomprehensibly, God's ridiculous plan of abundant blessing happened.

So we are here, in this crazy and terrible time. And to say that God intends good seems like a pipedream. But that God intends good is another sort of dream. It is a dream of remembrance, of times of joy and love and peace and how grateful we were for God's great love for us once and again and again, so why not now. That God intends good is a dream of hope, made possible through the faith of others before us, a faith we inherited, the best legacy of those who once struggled as we struggle now, wrestling with the strange timing of God's providence, yet somehow moving forward in faith nonetheless. That God intends good is a dream offered in love, God's steadfast love, love before time and through time and for all time, and yes even and especially for our time. That God intends good is a dream of peace, like the still waters that restore our souls and the living waters which nourish us to continue the work of peace.

So breathe, just breathe, today and tomorrow and each day forward. And for today, and tomorrow, and Tuesday and as we await results, do something in love each day. Whatever our anxieties or worries or fears, do something in love each day. Offer a kind word. Offer some help. Offer a prayer. Be part of the living water that restores all creation. Be a part of God's dream of love and peace and hope. There will be much required of us of patience in the days ahead, and we can do it with God's help. And there will be much required of us for the continued building up of God's kingdom here on earth, regardless of what the results of the election will be. Find moments beside the still waters and breathe. Find ways to be part of the living waters flowing through the city bringing healing to the nations.

As always, let God shepherd you and light your way. Amen.

Let us turn our hearts and minds to God in prayer. Creator God, in this time of changeable days, of cold nights and winds that rattle the windows, we give thanks for the warmth of your love and for the calm blessing of your grace.

Help us with endurance for the trek through the wilderness of pandemic has been long already, yet we know that there is more journey ahead. As the days grow shorter and the night longer, help us to light the way for one another. There is so much more light and fullness of life needed in our world. There are so many in our world who don't feel the abundance of life force that this season entails, it is a season they have not felt was made for them, for others maybe, but not for them. So many feel just the cold of disregard and loneliness, for they do not know love and human kindness. For those discriminated against, for the color of their skin, because of whom they love, for how they experience their own gender, for their nation of origin, for the lack of money or wealthy they possess, or for the way their bodies manifest illness or disease, we pray that we may come to always be a source of love and care for them. God bless them and keep them, and help us all to work to change hearts and minds that would choose to oppress, abuse, and even take the life of those who some too easily and readily put into the category of "other," but who are indeed are siblings in Christ. Help us to distribute the harvest of blessings that you intend for all.

There are so many among us, in our community, and in the world suffering in body, mind, and spirit, in need of your healing compassion and care – grant all in need an experience of your renewing touch, especially...

We hold in our prayers today especially those for whom the isolation is weighing on their mental and emotional well-being. Bless them and all of us with your healing compassion and care.

Moment of silent meditation...

Breathe new breath into us, O Spirit of the living God. Fall afresh on us. Help us to breathe new life and new hope into our communities, especially in these uncertain times. With each breath we take, help us to be filled with your patience, your hope, your joy, your strength, your courage, your love. With each breath we take in and exhale, help us to remember that it is through us that your love and mercy flow, that your hope and a vision for a peaceable community of mutual respect and caring will be made real, as we taught to us by the one we call messiah, son of the living God, who taught us to pray to you saying, Our Father...