

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

May the Force Be With You

Psalm

Psalm 139:1-12 (NRSVUE)

- ¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
- ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
- ³ You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.
- ⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
- ⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
- ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
- ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and night wraps itself around me,"^[a]
- ¹² even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

Bible/Sermon Focus

All major religions have some kind of concept like the "force" in the Star Wars films. In eastern religions we have the concept of om. In Christianity we have the Holy Spirit. Native peoples understood that all creation, from the bee to the tree to the rock, had a life force that deserved to be witnessed and respected. And that to ignore that life force, that spirit, would lead to an unhealthy and broken relationship with creation and community.

Even in new age mysticism you will hear people talk about a "one consciousness" or a sameness in all things. Postmodern thinkers even philosophize and theologize around scientific concepts. Work with subatomic particles, string theory, and unifying field theory, has led thinkers to consider if there is a provable substance that we all share and that, perhaps, we can experience that sharing.

In a society that favors only the fun and happy part of our existence, it is refreshing that Star Wars presents the force as one that permeates all things and is found in both the light and

dark. It is a force that is able to be used for good, or for bad, depending on who is using it. And, when this force is used for harmful purposes, the trans-generational work of reparation connects to the future hope of redemption. Harm committed in the past and present may still be healed in the generations to come.

The Spirit of God is in and through all things. It is available to us at any time if we just turn our presence toward it, choose it, or in the words of Scripture, "clothe ourselves" with it. And we have the power to respect creation and use it for good, or exploit it for our own acts of greed, depending on the kind of relationship we have with the Spirit.

Most humans throughout history understood themselves to be one small part of the entirety of creation, not lords over it. We see this still today in more indigenous cultures. In contrast, imperialized nations with a Judeo-Christian cultural center tend to emphasize a relationship with creation in which we exploit the world around us for personal gain, leaving us unable to give witness to the divine spark in all.

Our world is in a climate crisis, yet our understating of a shared relational existence is one of human to human, an androcentric idea of the world. Creation seems to be here for our taking and using. Viewing the divine as a divinity shared may help us be in better relationship with all of creation. As Pastor Andy said this week, "The unity of the Spirit is a reality, it exists. It is not our job to create it." It's all about what we do with it.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think of when you think of the "force?"
2. Reflect on this quote from Master Yoda, *"Pass on what you have learned. Strength. Mastery. But weakness, folly, failure also. Yes, failure most of all. The greatest teacher, failure is. Luke, we are what they grow beyond."*
3. This week's sermon brought up the idea that the Spirit's work is across time, and does transgenerational work to bring about the will of God. Reflect on this quote, *"The meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit."*
4. Discuss as a group the problematic nature of an androcentric world view.

Prayer

God who teaches and heals across generations and time, we thank you for your uniting Spirit that moves in and through and around all things. Help us to be aware and responsive to all of your creation, to witness to your Spirit in all of these things. Give us a holy awe and wonder and awareness to your majestic presence. **Amen.**

"We are luminous beings, bound together by the divine that is within us, and among us, and around us"