

# Dear Disciples

October 15, 2021

## Transcript



Hello, Disciples. Each week, I make it part of my own devotional practice to study the lectionary Scriptures. I'm no longer a congregational pastor, preaching every week, although I do preach often, but this is my form of spiritual and scriptural discipline.

This week's Hebrew Bible text, or one of them, comes from the book of Job, a familiar story. Many of us know the story of Job, who had everything, and seemingly lost everything, and was challenged by friends and family to consider whether he had perhaps done something wrong, perhaps he was being punished. Job, at a moment of righteous piety, says, "What could I have possibly have done wrong? There must be something wrong in God's calculation. Look at all that I have been. I have been a faithful servant. How could God allow this to happen to me?"

Chapter 38 begins, "And then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." Many of you preachers, I know, have spoken often about the idea of God speaking to Job out of the whirlwind. The Lord says, "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man. I will question you and you shall declare to me, where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me." If you have understanding, that image of God speaking to Job out of the world, then reminds us - reminds me - that the God I serve is so much larger than everything I face, everything we deal with.

Job, as good as he thought he was, did not have all the answers. He never doubted God, but he did begin to think himself, perhaps, to be on par with God. His wife and family said, "Curse your God and die. What good is this God who has taken everything from you?" Elihu, the priest, comes to remind him that God is yet God, and who are you to challenge or even question God. I believe that God can take our questioning. I believe that God can take our anger and our lament, as we hear so clearly throughout the Psalms. God can take our shaking our fists and saying why, how long, why, as long as we release those clenched fists into hands lifted upward in praise.

We've been talking so much about imagining the limitless love of God, and, for me, it all begins with who I believe God to be. If God, indeed, is bigger than all we can ask or think; if God is able to do above all that we can ask or think; if God's love truly limitless and if that love wants for us so much more than we can imagine, perhaps it's time to get inside that limitless love and get inside that limitless imagination in order to claim for ourselves the kingdom of God here on earth - what God truly intended for God's creation, a place where all have enough, where all are welcome to fellowship and covenant, not only at the Lord's Table, but, with the Lord, to experience. That limitless love of God is revealed to us through Jesus Christ. Where were we when the

worlds were founded? Do we not believe and embrace the idea that God is so much bigger than anything, anyone, we can imagine?

Many times we are faced with difficulties. There are pandemics; there are health concerns; there are financial concerns - things we simply don't understand. My mother passed away just over a month ago, and as we were going through the things in her beloved office space, my sister was wanting to find some samples of her handwriting to keep. My sister is a scrapbooker. We were going through several Bibles that she had on her desk, and inside one of those Bibles was a piece of cardstock - two pieces actually - and on one of them my mother had written this: When we get to the edge of all our knowledge, we will step on something solid or we will be taught how to fly.

My mother, who, for the last 30 years of her life, dealt with multiple cancers, chronic illnesses that required infusions to build up her antibodies every three weeks; who seemingly faced challenge after challenge with her health that wore down her body year after year; and, at the end of her life, what we find are texts that she had marked in her Bible. Joshua, the first chapter where Moses has passed away and Joshua is told by God, "I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. Only be strong and of a good courage." My mother wrote down, "When we get to the edge of all our knowledge, we will step on something solid, or we will be taught how to fly." There was no citation. I didn't know where this came from, and in our weekly Wednesday Facebook prayer live, I mentioned this quote, and one of our Disciple ministers said that it is from the poem *Faith* by a Disciples poet, Rev. Patrick Miles Overton. I bought the book, [\*The Leaning Tree\*](#), from which this poem came. And I want to share the actual poem. Apparently my mother had heard somebody else quoting it, and it's been quoted and perhaps paraphrased over time. This poem, Faith.

"When we walk to the edge of all the light we have, and take that step into the darkness of the unknown, we must believe that one of two things will happen: there will be something solid for us to stand on or we will be taught how to fly. Where were you when I created the earth? When you get to the edge of all you know, please believe and trust that I, the Lord your God, who created the heavens and the earth, will give you something solid to step on. Or, I believe the Lord says, I will teach you how to fly."

Thank you, Disciples, as I prepare to take a sabbatical that the general board of the church so graciously allows me to have beginning November 1. I will be on sabbatical and returning to ministry on February 1. Would you pray with me for rest and renewal and rejuvenation? That God will speak? That I will be able to get inside God's imagination? That I will find rest? That is, my friend Christal Williams said, that I will not only get off the train but I will fully leave the station until it's time to return to work again.

God bless you. Remember that God loves you. Remember that when we get

to the edge of all we know, God will give us something solid to step out on, or we will be taught how to fly. Remember that God loves you, and so do I. I'll see you in February.

