

December 22, 2019
Rev. Jane Florence
Title; "Rhythm of Wholeness"
Text: Isaiah 61: 1-3



For a while, I was pretty certain that God lived in my shower. The reason being when I would step in my morning shower still groggy and half asleep, the hot steamy water relaxed my muscles even further, and in that warm, misty cocoon, suddenly I would get an inspiration for my children's sermon –or- I would realize a solution to a problem that had perplexed me the previous day. My greatest ideas seemed to come to me in the shower. I had the hardest time trying to write them down in there, but it seemed as though God spoke in my shower.

Maybe something like that has happened to you. Lying in bed at night exhausted from wrestling with a problem all day. Unable to figure it out, you can't sleep because your brain just won't let it go; it keeps on churning away seeking a solution. Finally, you wear yourself out or the Tylenol PM kicks in, and you are starting to drift off to sleep when Eureka! The answer comes to you!

I learned something from drumming that might offer more enlightenment to my God –in –my-shower theory. When we are going about our day tending to the tasks at hand, our brain waves are flowing between 14-40 cycles per second. When we relax and are more inwardly focused, our brain waves slow to 7-14 cycles per second. When we are really relaxed, on the threshold of sleep or in our misty cocoon shower, in limbo between conscious and unconsciousness, our brains slow to 4-7 cycles per second. It is in that third tier, that semi-conscious twilight space where great creative solutions are birthed and mystical insights are experienced.

Furthermore, our brain has two halves, right and left hemispheres. The right side is our creative, visual, emotional center. The left side is our rational, logical, verbal center. Many of us live more in one sphere than the other, but we all cycle between right and left throughout the day depending on our task at hand. There are brain waves going on in both hemispheres- cycling between different frequencies depending on what tasks are at hand.

I was surfing through tv this week, and I heard a phrase that caused me to pause on a channel that I normally would not. I saw part of a basketball game. One team was ahead at the start of the 4th quarter, but the sports caster said they lost their rhythm. He said they lost their stride; they fell out of sync. They lost the game in the last minute because they were suddenly out of sync.

Syntonization is important. Our electronic devices can be synced. Our camera, cell phone, calendars and contacts can plug into our computers or connect to the cloud and the sync function will make all the data match, aligned, cohesive, the same. Synchronization are

when things are happening or working at the same time, in harmony or agreement. Last week, I mentioned the Law of Entrainment. It was back in 1665 when a Dutch scientist noticed that when he hung two pendulum clocks on the wall- by the next morning the pendulums were swinging in unison. The two clocks – without being plugged into a usb data port- had matched their movements. Thus the concept of entrainment was identified. Entrainment is the aligning of frequencies.

It turns out that the same notion of entrainment works with our bodies as well as wall clocks. Intense creativity, deep meditation, and rhythmic sound can bring the electrical impulses in the two hemispheres of our brain into synchronization. Deep relaxation, or rhythmic sound... like water in the shower or fountain, ... like the chants of ancient religious practices.....like the meditation , singing bowls of Tibet. like the drums used to lead the shaman into mystical revelations. ... like the Gregorian chants of the monasteries... or the mantras of familiar prayers.. repeated patterns of sound align breathing, heart rate and brain waves; we become synchronized . Did “primitive” peoples from thousands of years ago somehow know what our medical instruments of today teach us about brain waves?

500 years before Jesus was born, Isaiah spoke to the Israelites who were living out of sync under foreign domination. They were uncertain about their labor, their homes, their sustenance. Into their broken world, Isaiah proclaimed, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me - to bring good news to the oppressed - to bind up the brokenhearted.” He painted a scene of healing and wholeness that comes from God’s Spirit using word pictures. He described placing a victor’s garland upon one’s head instead of the ashes of mourning. He honed the image of pouring oil upon one’s head to inaugurate a king, or celebrate a blessed event- instead of the oil used for anointing the sick or dead. He imaged people wearing the attitude of praise and celebration instead of a faint spirit, demoralized by the times. Isaiah sang a song of hope and wholeness to a world even as their world was as out of sync – in just as much trouble - as we are today.

Poverty and unemployment, violence and uncertain futures may be in the news now, but they are not new to the world. People have been living in uncertain times since time began. People have been through desperate times, slavery and oppression, violence and addictions, tyrants, dictators and emperors for thousands of years. Broken and fearful people try to feel better by taking more, hoarding more and destroying others.

Over and over and over again, those who find peace, and meaning, and hope, like Isaiah and Mary, like Jesus, like the mystics and monks, like the famous and ordinary, those who find peace, and meaning and hope, find a new Spirit of Life bringing healing by **synchronizing their lives – not with the chaos of the world around them-but with the Spirit of God within them. Our wisdom teachers synchronize their lives not with the anxiety of 24/7 news, but with the peace of 24/7 Spirit of God.**

Imagine yourself adorned with a garland of joy instead of ashes of mourning and a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. It can happen. It doesn’t happen by chance. The

fix is not in the stock market or investment portfolio. The solution isn't at the mall or on-line or at the sports arena.

Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor is a neurologist at Harvard Medical School. She devoted her life to studying the human brain. One day her analysis of brain waves became personal- the day she had a stroke when she was 37 years old. Although it took her eight years to recover, she thinks of her stroke as a blessing. When the left hemisphere of her brain suffered massive shut down in the stroke, she 'stepped to the right' of her brain. When the left side of her brain shut down, so did what she called that 'incessant brain chatter' that was always critical of herself and others. She called it 'internal verbal abuse.' She wasn't aware of how destructive those negative thoughts were until the circuit for their transport was disrupted. Once it was silenced, her life was transformed. Now that she has fully recovered, she realizes she has the choice to 'step to the right' and silence that negative circuit whenever it starts to spew destructively. She has found a new balance in life and inner peace.

We don't have to have a stroke, have part of our brain shut down in order to find our balance. We can learn from the science of today and from the wisdom of the ancient world religions.

We can enter into those practices which bring us into sync. We can begin by simply sitting for a few moments as we start our day. Sitting in the quiet of the morning, noticing our breathing, and connecting with the Breath of God as we inhale and exhale intentionally drawing God's presence into our day.

We can carry that presence with us throughout our day. As we walk to the coffee pot or coke machine, or dash out to the mailbox or down the hall, we can slow to bring awareness of each step aligned with each breath as an imprint of peace on the earth and in our being. We can tap on our desk; we can drum on the table top; we can repeat a phrase of blessing or hum a sacred verse. We can hold a strand of prayer beads or view the sacred in art or the beauty of nature. We can enter into God's presence, and our body, our mind, and spirit will sing in one accord, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me!" therein lies our HOPE and our WHOLENESS.

Thanks be to God.

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