

One With the ONE

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Ephesians 4.4-5; John 6.33-35

The writer of the book of Ephesians, once thought to be St. Paul (but scholars now have doubts), makes a very philosophical claim this morning. "There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Source of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

That is a very progressive and inclusive view, one which the Church has not often enough promoted. The text says over and over that there is ONE.

It reminds us of the Shema: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord you God is ONE" (Dt. 6.4). We are then told to love the ONE with our wholeness, with all that we are, with our ONENESS. Being one with the ONE we are to recognize the ONE expressing through and as us by loving the One with all that we are and loving our neighbor as ourselves, because our neighbor is one with the One also, and one with us. Love yourself, because you are an individuation of the One; love your neighbor because she is also an individuation of the One.

Ephesians also reminds us of Jesus' words in the gospel of Mark, "The Lord your God is one Lord" (Mk. 12.29), and in the 4th gospel Jesus is quoted, "I and the Father are ONE" (Jn. 10.30). The divine Presence is whole, all-encompassing, flowing through and expressing as all that is. Jesus isn't boasting when he says he is one with the ONE; he is demonstrating the affirmation that we are all to make, that the writers of Deuteronomy made, that the writer of Ephesians made. We are one with the divine One.

After all, even as children we were taught that God is OMNIPRESENT. That means that God is everywhere at all times. "There's not a spot where God is not."

Two things can't occupy the same space at the same moment...so if God is here, what else is there? If God is omnipresent, what could oppose God? "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8.31). What is there to oppose God, compete with God, threaten God, or even hide from God?

If God is everywhere, that is, if God is one, then all that is must in some way be one with the ONE, just as a drop of water is one with the OCEAN. The drop is a microcosm of the oceanic Macrocosm. That is, what the Ocean is in the large, the droplet is in the small. But though the Ocean is vast and the drop seems miniscule, the fact remains that elementally and energetically, the drop is made of the same stuff as the Ocean...the drop is the child of the Ocean, and the child and the Parent are one.

This may seem very quantum physics or very philosophical or very new age or very modernist or very liberal...until we see, stated as plainly as any scripture is ever stated, "There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Source of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

There is One...and it is through and in ALL. That means you...just as you are.

Now, let's not over think this. We aren't Socrates. Most of us don't have the time sit under an olive tree for years at a time pondering the deep questions of life. But if we could stop thinking of God as a voyeur in the sky keeping track of our mistakes and insisting that we agree with certain opinions and beliefs in order to be acceptable to God, and instead start

to imagine that it is actually in God “that we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17.28), so many of our fears and apprehensions would be healed.

The psalmist said, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?” (Psalm 139.7) There is not a spot where God is not! There is one God and source of all...and that God is flowing through us all and dwelling in us all, and we are in God. Like air. Like energy. Like light. God is ubiquitous, and could never abandon us or forsake us or reject us...any of us for any reason.

There is one body, the body of humanity, living on this one planet, as part of our one living, intelligent universe, filled with the one omnipresent spirit of life! Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? In God we live and move and have our being. The Lord our God is ONE. We are immersed completely, that is, baptized into this living spirit, this God and source of all who is above all and through all and in all!

That means your sacred value need never be doubted. Your magnificence, your brilliance, your lovability, your holiness can be embraced, accepted, and celebrated. We may have not always believed in ourselves, and acting from our fears and hurts and regrets we may not have always lived into our divine potential, but not even our mistakes or our failures or our negative attitudes can separate us from the universal presence that God is! “For I am convinced that [nothing] can separate us from the love of God...” (Rom. 8.38-39).

If we can believe that we are in God and God is in us, that God’s love is unconditional and all-inclusive, that God is expressing in, through, and as us, that nothing could ever separate us from God’s presence, that we are in some way forever one with the ONE, then we will forever be nourished by the divine Presence. It’s always with us, expressing as us.

The only thing keeping us ever from experiencing this reality is our belief that God is somehow removed from us, or opposed to us. When we can say, as Jesus did, “the Eternal and I are one,” that will be nourishment that will sustain us in good times and bad, that will energize us when circumstances are beyond our control. This eternal relationship that we can learn to trust with all that we are is the bread which gives life. Once we know that this bread is available to us in relationship with the Source of all that is, then we can say that spiritually we will never hunger or thirst again.

I can’t promise that you’ll win the lottery.

I can’t promise that your family will become enlightened and recognize your sacred value. I can’t promise that congress and the supreme court will end hunger with the stroke of a pen, or will guarantee quality health care for all people tomorrow, or will end legalized discrimination once and for all.

I can’t promise that the experimental treatment will work, or that the person you met online will turn out to be Prince or Princess Charming.

I can join you in hoping for the best, but whatever happens, I can promise that NOTHING will ever separate you from the love of God.

I can promise that in this life and beyond, there is a loving presence enfolding you, flowing through you, expressing as you, that will never let you go. That could never let you go. You are forever one with the ONE.

Embracing this gospel message can fill us with joy that no circumstance can ever take away. And this is the good news. Amen.

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I am in God.
God is in me.
I am united with God.
God’s love is blessing me now.

**I and the Eternal are one.
And so I rejoice!
And so it is.**

We can choose to think of ourselves as united with God, filled with God's spirit, enfolded in God's love. As Louise Hay reminds us, "The only thing you ever have any control of is your current thinking. Your current thought, the one you are thinking now, is totally under your control."