

Take God's Hand

01/22/17

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

I've been speaking recently about trusting God, having faith, and focusing on the positive aspects of life rather than the darkness.

Part of trusting God is allowing ourselves to be seen by God, to be open to the loving examination and guidance of the inner God presence we call the Christ. It is humbling to admit to ourselves and God our human frailties and tendencies. Yet it is through our trust and humility that God has the opportunity to lead us from our offensive ways to the way everlasting.

Our one single purpose is to become aware that we are one with that Presence that surrounds us; we are one with God. There is no separation from Spirit; there is no division, or qualitative difference.

When a wave crashes upon a rock, individual parts of the ocean are exposed momentarily as droplets, individualized parts of the ocean. They are suspended briefly in the air, glistening in the light, and then fall to join the body of ocean again.

We are like that. For a moment, while we are walking the earth, we are individualized reflections of God expressed through these bodies; glistening in the light of Spirit, and then after a brief stay we rejoin that infinite body of Spirit.

It is while we are suspended individually that we tend to lose ourselves; we lose who we really are. We think we are these bodies, these individual droplets of Spirit, seemingly separate from the Whole. It is at these times when our thinking takes us away from our union with God and we feel pain, anxiety, and stress ... and loneliness.

God doesn't intend for us to feel hurt - challenges yes, of course! But not the soul-felt pains that many of us experience. Amidst the times of deepest turmoil, it is God's desire for us to remember who we are - a Child of God, one with our Creator. Spirit wants us to remember that we are Spirit. Our goal is to raise our awareness.

We call this the Spiritual Path, or Inner Journey. It is easy to ignore our true nature and move our focus to the physical world - the human condition. It is alluring, tempting, easy to give in to the physical senses - and this clouds our awareness and diminishes our vision.

Jesus says it this way in Matthew 7:13 - *Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.*

We're not talking hell or death here. We are talking about being caught in the limited earthly thinking, which perpetuates the pain, angst, and separation we feel from God. He is referring to the suffering we feel at times when we forget who we are. The narrow road requires focus and commitment.

When an athlete walks, runs, jumps and flips on a narrow 4 inch beam, we call it astounding. The athlete would call it focus. They don't see the ground, they don't see the entire beam - they see a single point on the beam where their next step will be...that is all they see.

The advanced mountain climber, with the goal of summiting Mount Everest doesn't focus on the top at all. They are absolutely focused on their next step, regardless of how slowly and arduously it comes. That is their focus.

Where is our focus in the good times and the bad? Where are we staring? Are we walking a path and looking far in front of us? Or are we paying attention to the small pebbles that could cause us to lose our balance if we weren't paying attention? Is it both?

Even the holy men can be distracted. Paramahansa Yogananda says that although advanced yogis can do amazing things - like manipulate matter, cause fragrances to appear for nowhere, even be in two places at one time - these can be distractions to the true purpose of yoga, which is to find union with God.

God gave us senses so we can enjoy this Creation, so we could find pleasure while we are here. There is nothing ungodly about pleasure and having fun. It is when sense pleasures become our focus in life, and become a distraction, that is what causes us to lose our balance and fall off the path, the beam.

I truly believe that all spiritual paths lead to God. We are attracted at a soul level to the path that best suits us. That is why there are so many religions, creeds, denominations, and belief systems. We will find the one that draws us ever closer to the oneness with God. We will be more strongly focused when we are in tune to the Spirit within us, directly within us.

When we criticize other beliefs, or judge them in some way, we are committing, what one minister described as, ‘metaphysical malpractice’. It doesn’t help us along our path to knock someone off their path. Believing that our path is the only path, or that ours is the only way to interpret the words of Jesus or the Bible, is disrespectful to the Spirit of God that is guiding every other individual as well.

And even more importantly, it is a distraction from our own path when we are so intently focused on someone else’s.

At times our way may become so unsteady that we can use a hand to help us retain our balance. It takes just the lightest touch to steady ourselves again. And that hand does more than help us keep our balance: it gives us comfort and security. That is what

God's presence is for us - a light, but steadying hand that can help us keep balance and provide comfort and security along our path.

When the human side of us is all we express, when we allow our life circumstances to capture our attention, when we are focused on the darkness and shadows of difficulties instead of the Light of Peace and Love...those are the times when we can reach out to God in our thoughts and prayers, opening our hearts and asking for God's steadying hand to support us. God will never fail to respond. We have only to open our hearts, grab God's hand, and together take the next step.

And in all this talk about the metaphor of walking the path, I must remind myself that the path is only a metaphor itself for the inner journey into Spirit. There is nowhere we physically have to go to find God. It is an inner uncovering, a remembering that we are one with God's presence and that infinite essence of Spirit. Not so much a journey, as an awakening to our true nature of Spirit.

Call it an awakening, path, or journey - let's not be distracted by semantics and the workings of our thoughts and mind. Instead, I pray that we remember our divinity, take God's hand, focus on the next step, and allow the Christ to lead us home.

Let us pray....