

Today we continue our contemplation of how we deal with the traumas of our lives, both large and small. Last Sunday we spoke of the natural ebb and flow of our nervous system--a part of us that is “wonderfully made” by the creator. We talked about the importance of noticing the sensations of our bodies and how our mind, spirit, emotions, and bodies are integrated and work beautifully together to help us be our best selves. We remembered how when Jesus healed he healed the whole person.

Today I want to focus on two more important pieces to emotional well-being. They are both referred to in Psalm 46. The Psalmist gives voice to the Creator: “Be still and know that I am God.” “Be still” means to be grounded. Grounding is the relationship between a person and the earth and this grounding is necessary to experience physical, emotional & spiritual safety. Paul Tillich, a great theologian of recent history, spoke of God as “the ground of being.” Spiritually, we seek to ground ourselves to the ground of all being, which is God.

How do we do this? The process may sound and feel familiar to you because it employs meditation and relaxation techniques you may have used before. The difference is that the meditation and relaxation achieved are not the ends in themselves but are used to get us to a place where we can sense what our bodies are telling us and sense how God’s healing presence may be embodied within us.

If you’re willing, let’s give it a try.

Find a comfortable position (not the easiest thing to do in these pews, some pillows are available, feel free to move to a chair or the floor if that’s more comfortable).

As you find a comfortable position, bring your awareness to the inner sensations you feel. Notice how your body is supported by the pew, the chair, the floor, the earth, the ground of being.

Notice your breathing, your heart rate, your muscle tension or relaxation. Bring your attention to your legs and then your feet and notice your feet placed firmly on the ground. Be still and notice the sensations that comfort you, the places within you where there is no pain and no discomfort. If you become aware of uncomfortable sensations, bring your attention to places that feel neutral or better.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. ‘Be still, and know that I am God!’

To ground ourselves to the ground of all being invites us to make a choice. It is a choice for health and healing, for the harmony God desires for all creation. In John’s gospel, Jesus asks the lame man, “Do you want to be made well?” Most of us want to be well, in body and soul, but we may feel too frantic to own this choice. Noticing the sensations of our bodies can help us be open to healing. God invites us to “be still.”

Besides grounding, we bring to the healing process resources. Last week when I spoke of how we are “wonderfully made” I didn’t just mean the intricacies of the human body, though indeed our bodies are a marvel. God made us with resources to bring to the living out of our days. We may have some resources in common and some resources with which we are uniquely gifted.

A resource can be anything that helps a person feel better. It can be something the person likes about him/herself, a positive memory, a person, place, animal, spiritual guide, or anything that provides comfort.

The resource is simply brought to mind and then one's attention is directed to the internal sensation associated with the resource. (Miller-Karas & Leitch) I am aware of many, many resources within this congregation. These would include courage, compassion, humor, selflessness, generosity, intelligence, creativity, intuition, musical abilities, inspiration, prophetic voices, gracefulness, perseverance, flexibility, spiritual acuity.

I'd like for us to practice identifying the gifts of resources God has given to us. As I ask you some questions, I invite you to answer them in your mind and heart. As we ponder these gifts of resources, let us enter God's presence in silence and gratitude.

What gives you strength and/or joy in your life? Describe in your mind a person, place, animal, spiritual belief that sustains or nurtures you?

As you think of these resources, bring your attention to what is happening within you. Where in your body do you feel the sensations as you think of your resources that are pleasing and encouraging to you?

Notice what happens inside our bodies as we think about our resources. What sensations do you notice. What is happening to your breath...heart rate...muscle tension. Notice and be aware of these changes. (Miller-Karas & Leitch)

The Psalmist identifies his or her spiritual resources and we are invited to bring them into our spiritual lives:

God is our refuge and strength.

God as ground of being provides stability in an otherwise unstable world.

God is in our midst and offers help.

God holds the vision of the whole creation and powerfully invites us to peace.

God wants us to be in relationship with God; to know that God IS!

The God of Jacob and those who lived in ancient times is also our refuge.

“Be still, and know God”.

Let's briefly review what we've learned so far about trauma and how we have resiliency for healing. We are wonderfully made with intricate bodies and a triune brain where all three parts, the thinking, the emotional, and the survival brains, work in concert as we respond to our world. We have been gifted by God with resources to help us live faithfully and fully in relationship with God and with all creation. These resources can help us find places of comfort and resiliency as we face traumas in our lives and in our world. They can help us to be grounded in the ground of all being and to our best selves as part of God's healing of creation.

Next week, we'll touch on two healing techniques called titration and pendulation. I call these techniques “taking the edge off.” The sermon title is: “In God We Dwell” because the purpose of these three sermons has been to help us live our best within God's presence in which all dwell. Also, Elaine will be with us to share next Sunday.