

DARE TO WONDER: *What Are the Best Spiritual Practices?*

Romans 2:4; Psalm 46:10; Philippians 4:8

- i. Last week we were challenged to stay focused on the “**treasure**” in the midst of all of the noise.
- ii. This week I want to talk about how to do stay focused on Christ in the midst of the noise.
- iii. A true encounter.
- iv. Anne Lamott said, “The opposite of faith is not doubt, the opposite of faith is certainty.”
- v. The problem with our spiritual best practices is that we never get out of the gate because we are angry, exhausted and certain.
- vi. I suggest that this is no real fault of our own...consider the GREAT COMMA: born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontus Pilate...The Apostles Creed.
- v. The GREAT COMMA creates space for us to become detectives of divinity, sleuths of slant, to wonder, to gaze upon congruence, to live a disciplined life, where questions and mystery open us to new expressions of faith and obedience that are fixed on Christ and open to the rest.

THE GREAT COMMA OPENS US UP TO CONSIDER THREE SPIRITUAL BEST PRACTICES THAT MAKE US READY FOR THE BIG KNOW ONES....

I. KINDNESS IS A GATEWAY TO GOD

- A. The ancient philosophers believed that kindness was the door to all virtues.
- B. Paul said, “It is God’s kindness that leads to repentance.”
- C. Social Scientists know this: James Fowler said we must most from a mythic/literal faith to a faith that is built on universal love and justice because that is the way God is.
- D. Kindness is the doorway
- E. Kindness is wisdom with respect for all people and things. The word (re)spect is to take a second look at something. It is the opposite of certainty; it is rooted in humility.

II. STOP: LIVE LIFE AT 3 MPH

- A. The poet writes, “Be still and know that I am God.”
- B. God is not a binary God of right and wrong, male or female, democrat or Republican, Christian or pagan, or with me or against me.
- C. God is a being of three, it allows for more than either verses or. God invites curiosity, mystery, coherence, wonder, bewilderment, curiosity, questions, and congruence with all people and things. Hegel knew this: thesis, antithesis leads to synthesis=3rd way!
- D. Only presence can know presence. Our real presence can know REAL PRESENCE.

III. CONTEMPLATION

- A. Scripture says, “think on whatever is noble, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy.”
- B. Contemplation is religion—to re-align. It is where the word yoga comes from—the connectedness of all things.
- C. Contemplation waits patiently for the gaps to be filled in, and doesn’t insist on quick closure, easy answers, or the need to be right.
- D. Contemplation leads to transformation. We are called to follow Jesus. He never asks us to worship him.

*This is a destiny moment for us as a church, a neighborhood and as a nation. God is up to something good.

** “Everything will be all right in the end, If it’s not all right, it is not the end.” ~The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel