

Devotion, Second Week after Epiphany, 2023

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

The women of PPC had an enjoyable day at Camp Calvin this past week, looking at the Psalms. We talked about the fact that there are more Lament psalms than any other kind. There's something, I think, about feeling free to turn over one's pain to God that is reassuring to us all. Lament psalms almost always end with an acknowledgement that God hears and responds – there is a sense that by turning things over to God, God will hear us and relieve the suffering.

The ladies gave me several gifts at the end of the day. One of them is a little devotional book, called “Too Blessed To Be Stressed – 3-Minute Devotions For Women.” One of the first devotions struck me as appropriate for the beginning of a new year, and a year where we are studying the Sabbath in our PW circles. The scripture is from Matthew 11:28, using Eugene Peterson's translation of the Bible, “The Message:”

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest.”

The author of this book, Debora Coty, is an orthopedic occupational therapist. Her commentary about this passage encouraged me: “We have to be willing to sneak up on ourselves and rest in an unexpected beautiful moment before we can talk ourselves out of it through reason and sensibility schedules and agendas.... It's up to us to choose to slow down enough to enjoy snapshots of beauty...that bring rest and peace to our weary souls.”

During the PW retreat Saturday, we talked about the rainbow (some saw a double one) after the tornados last week. I noticed the other day that my Lenten roses are budding out, and a few pink ones are blooming. My camellias have a few buds that didn't get frozen and are starting to bloom again. Taking a moment to appreciate these little beautiful gifts from God is what we are called to do. But to do that, we have to stop, pay attention, and rest in that moment a little. These moments are little Sabbaths – and if you can, I encourage you to try to find at least one Sabbath moment during each day. It will give you rest and uplift your spirits.

Jeanne