

Read

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, 2:4-12

Hosea 11:1-11

Consider

When my 7-year-old grandson asked me if I knew which team, the Blue Jays or the Yankees, won in the opening game that took place in New York, I knew baseball season has started and this little fellow would start feeding me with baseball news all over again. He loves baseball and I love watching him practice. And I would again marvel at how he imitates professional pitcher in throwing a ball, first lifting a leg to knee high, slowly turning to his side, with ball tucked in his glove, he would give a glaring look and then release the throw. It is amazing how children learn by observing and copying the acts of adults. In fact, there is this natural instinct in all of us wanting to learn and be like those whom we admire. Is there someone whom you have imitated growing up? Are you aware of whose influence you have been or may still be under in shaping and changing you as a person?

In his letters to churches, Paul repeatedly asked believers to imitate him as he imitated Christ. He charged them to follow his example as a follower and servant of the Lord. In 1 Thes 2:4-12 Paul described himself “like a mother” and “like a father” to them. Examine how he felt and cared for them and the example he set for us.

Read Hosea 11:1-4 and picture in your mind what God did for Israel. He called him, he taught him to walk, took him by the arms, healed them, led them, lifted their yoke, bent down to feed them.... Such an image of a loving father tenderly and tirelessly caring for his children! Then God poured out his heart, “How can I give you up? How can I hand you over?... My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused”. Here we get a glimpse of God’s long-suffering love, how he longed for the return of his children despite their apostasy and the inevitable woes and punishment that befell them. And it is with this undying everlasting love that Jesus came to bear our sins and died on the cross for us. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Look back on your journey to faith and reminisce on God’s love for you. Read the passage again and recall your personal experience of God’s care in your life. Recount answered prayers and personal encounters with God and give thanks to Him.

This coming Sunday, we celebrate Mother’s Day. May our hearts be warmed as we remember those who have gone before us and shown us love and kindness. May we be encouraged by their legacies and commit to pass the same onto those around and after us.

Deacon Dr. Josephine Chow

Pray

Here is a prayer to offer to God as we remember our roots on Mother's Day in a crazy covid time.

When the World Spins Crazy

by Walter Brueggemann

When the world spins crazy, spins wild and out of control, spins toward rage and hate and violence,
spins beyond our wisdom and nearly beyond our faith,
When the world spins in chaos as it does now among us...
We are glad for sobering roots that provide ballast in the storm.
So we thank you for our rootage in communities of faith,
for our many fathers and mothers who have believed and trusted as firm witnesses to us,
for their many stories of wonder, awe, and healing.
We are glad this night in this company for the rootage of the text, for the daring testimony,
for its deep commands, for its exuberant tales.
Because we know that as we probe deep into this text... clear to its bottom,
we will find you hiding there, we will find you showing yourself there,
speaking as you do, governing, healing, judging.
And when we meet you hiddenly, we find the spin not so unnerving,
because from you the world again has a chance for life and sense and wholeness.
We pray midst the spinning, not yet unnerved,
but waiting and watching and listening,
for you are the truth that contains all our spin. Amen.

by Walter Brueggemann, prayed at the Lay School of the Pentateuch on September 17, 2001.
from *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*, Fortress Press, 2003

Diving Deeper

Like a mother, like a father - a charge to imitate

1 Thes 2:4-12 Find out how Paul served the people in the early church. How did he relate to them? List out all the specific qualities and work that you can find about Paul in this passage. What can we learn from him?

What are some of the things or roles that God has entrusted you with? What do you think God expects you to do with these? Read 1 Cor 4:1-2 and learn from Paul.

Paul saw himself as a mother and like a father to the believers that he brought to Christ. Learn from these 4 aspects of Paul's parenting heart and reflect on how you can apply them to the roles and tasks that you currently hold:

- Commissioned by God - 1 Cor 4:1-2
- Compelled by love – 2 Cor 5:14
- Committed in action – 2 Cor 12:14
- Charged – keep fully charged with God's grace and power – 1 Cor 9:26-27, 2 Cor 12:9

How can we live closer **WITH** God in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?