

Date: July 27, 2014
Scriptures: Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Romans 8:26-39
Title: All Will Be Well

Vacations . . .

a change of pace,
a chance to recharge our batteries.

What a blessing they are!

They give us
the time and space to do things differently.

Change,
no matter how small it may be,
can open our eyes
to new ways of looking at things.

It can give rise to new understandings.

As we have done for the past ten or so years,
our family spent a week of our vacation
at the beach.

Years ago, I saw a tee shirt that said
"I go to the sea to breathe."

That is exactly what I do there.

I breathe ~

breathe in relaxation,
breathe in life,
breathe in unstructured time,
breathe in the joy of having the family
together again under one roof,
breathe in the space to contemplate nothing
and everything.

My favorite times of the day is early morning.

Most frequently,

I get up with the rising sun,
somewhere between 4 and 5am in Oregon.
brew a pot of coffee,
grab a cup,
then sit and look out at the ocean
especially the far horizon

where sea and sky meet.

At that time of the day,
the house is always quiet and still,
for the storm of the day's activities
has not yet descended.

This year, there were
as many cloudy days
as sunny ones.

What I noticed was
that on a clear day,
sky and sea stretched out before me
like an endless highway,
seemingly going on forever.

The sight of the sea on those mornings set my spirit free.
It filled me with hope
and an incredible feeling of lightness.

As you would expect,
the horizon was indistinct, hazy, blurred
on cloudy days.

Sky and sea seemed
to merge and become a soupy concoction,
which limited not only sight but also insight.

Those mornings, my spirit did not, could not, soar
beyond the confines
of the glass and steel house.

I prefer clear days to cloudy ones,
days when the horizon seems to go on forever
and life seems filled with infinite possibilities
and the sea is clear and calm.

But, anyone who has lived any length of time
knows life is not always like that.

Clouds descend,
fog rolls in,
seas toss and turn
and become a soupy concoction
and so do our lives.

When our lives billow and roll,
we are at risk ~
at risk of drifting away from God;
at risk of casting off
the moorings God provides.

This morning the apostle Paul
talks with us
about how to respond
when we are adrift
on life's stormy seas.

Always, he encourages us to pray
and most especially in times of trouble.
Interestingly, he does not give us a formula to follow.
He does not say,

“Do this and this and this.”

Rather, he acknowledges something
most of are uncomfortable admitting.

He says we don't know
how to pray or what to pray.

We don't know what to pray,
because even on a clear day,
our vision is limited.
limited by our hopes and fears,
our desires and needs.

Let me reassure you,
Paul is not criticizing us here.
He is reminding us we are not God.
Only God can see the big picture.
Only God can see infinity and beyond.

While we may not know how or what to pray,
prayer is essential.

It is essential,
because it keeps us tethered to God.

As we pray,
God' Spirit hears our aching groans and sighs
deciphers them,
and intercedes with God on our behalf.

Prayer is our link, our umbilical cord, to God

and also our anchor
as we sail life's stormy seas.

In addition to giving us
the most important tool we can have
for the living of our lives,
Paul urges us not to get discouraged
when we are out on the storm tossed seas.

He doesn't just say,
"Friends, Don't get discouraged.
Everything's going to be OK."

Paul issues a call to faith
using some of the most exquisite language in the Bible.

He says,
"If God is for us, who is against us?
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall tribulation or distress or persecution
or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?
I am convinced that neither death nor life
nor angels nor principalities
nor things present nor things to come
nor powers nor height nor depth
nor any other created thing
shall be able to separate us
from the love of God
in Christ Jesus
our Lord."

Paul speaks so eloquently,
because he wants us to believe
Christ Jesus is God's pledge to us.
Christ Jesus is God's pledge
that in all things we are more than conquerors.
In good times and bad and every time in between,
God goes with us,
strengthening, sustaining, and protecting us.
And always, always God is working
to bring good out of every situation.

Look at verse 28,

“We know God causes all things
to work together for good.”

May that great truth
guide the work of our hands,
enlighten our minds,
strengthen our hearts.

God is continually working
to bring good
out of every aspect of our lives.

There is no place
we can be
that God is not.

There is nothing
that can happen to us
that God cannot transform.

God is stronger than death.

Love overcomes hate.

Peace triumphs over war.

Believing that,

trusting that,

living that

allows us to say,

“All will be well

and all matter of thing will be well.” Amen.