

Changing Times: Week 4

Going with the flow:

Which flow? Whose flow?

The flow of the crowd? The flow of how you have always done things? The flow of responding to the next thing asked of you?

Or, the flow of the Holy Spirit and your deep spirit?

Going with the flow of the Spirit is about the experience of transforming relationship. We are becoming a different person – or rather we are becoming our own person, learning to go with the flow of our own God-given spirit and to trust it, even when it surprises us by leading us against the current of how we have done things up to now, or along our own road to Jerusalem.



This journey is not about a single step but a long walk into a relationship that will go on transforming us.

Words from the deep of God:

'Let me show you what the created world looks like when you start to be present to it. Notice its colours and sounds. Be aware of the beauty of life. How 'alive' it is! It is a joy always open for you to wander in.'

'Let me take you round this life you inhabit. You know it as a fearful place where wild beasts roam free. But look! The angels dwell here too. You are on holy ground of my presence and care.'

'Let me show you who I am. I feel your pain. I am moved to give all that I am to set you free. I am your servant, not your oppressor. I am the mystery beyond what you once believed about me. I want you to be.'

‘Let me introduce you to who you really are. See, there is so much more to discover! If you but befriend what you turn from, you will begin to know the contours of your face, and hear the sound of your own voice. It will take time for you to feel at ease. But if you make your home in me, you will come to be at home with who you are, and your life will be fruitful.’

Change: Some models from the Bible

Rather than try and explore all these different ways of picturing change, read them through briefly and then choose one to focus on.

Metanoia

Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is close at hand

Matthew 3.2 and 4.17

A change of direction, an inner change of mind and heart, a new way of thinking.

- What does it mean for you to ‘choose life’ at this point in your life?
- What do you sense you are called to stop doing, or turn from?
- What are you to turn to?

Retracing steps to find the right way.

Stand at the crossroads and look: ask for the ancient paths; which was the good way? Take it and you will find rest for yourselves

Jeremiah 6.16

Remembering

- What has God shown you in the past that brings light to your place today?
- When you re- member [put back together] the different ways you have experienced God with you and guiding you in the past, what light does this give to where you are today?

From the land of slavery to the land of milk and honey:

The Lord heard our voice and saw our misery...he brought us out of Egypt

Deuteronomy 26. 5-10

Setting out, step by step, on a journey to greater inner freedom

- What is the fear that holds you back? How does this fear limit you?
- What would it be like once, with God’s help, you overcame this fear?
- With what small step does your journey to freedom begin?

Death and resurrection / losing and finding

Anyone who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel will find it

Mark 8.34-37

Endings that in God become new beginnings. Letting go to God and finding new life.

- When have endings become new beginnings for you?
- What does God invite you to let go into his hands now?

A pearl of great price / treasure in a field:

The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off in joy, sells everything he owned and buys the field.

Matthew 13.44-46

- What is your 'pearl of great price'?
- What do you desire from God; what might you be prepared to let go of to gain this?

Walking on water

Peter answered: 'Lord if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water''

Matthew 14.22-33

Getting out of the safety of the boat in response to Jesus' invitation

- What would 'a step out of the boat' mean for you at this time in your life?

The seed growing by itself / the mustard seed

[Mark 4.26-32]

Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know.

Becoming aware of hidden life within.

Transformation takes place by cooperating with what God is doing. We discover new areas of energy, passion, or ability.

- In what ways are you aware of hidden life within you?
- How might you cooperate with God in nurturing this new life?

Interpreting the signs of the time

You know to read the face of the sky, but you do not know how to read the signs of the times

Mt 16.1-3

Hearing the message – 'it's time to stop', 'it's time to start'

- What are 'the signs of the time' for you at this point?
- What, outside you or inside you, says that now is a time for change?

Being born again

John 3.1-8

No-one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above
Experiencing new beginning by God's gift.

- What new beginning is God now bringing about in your life?

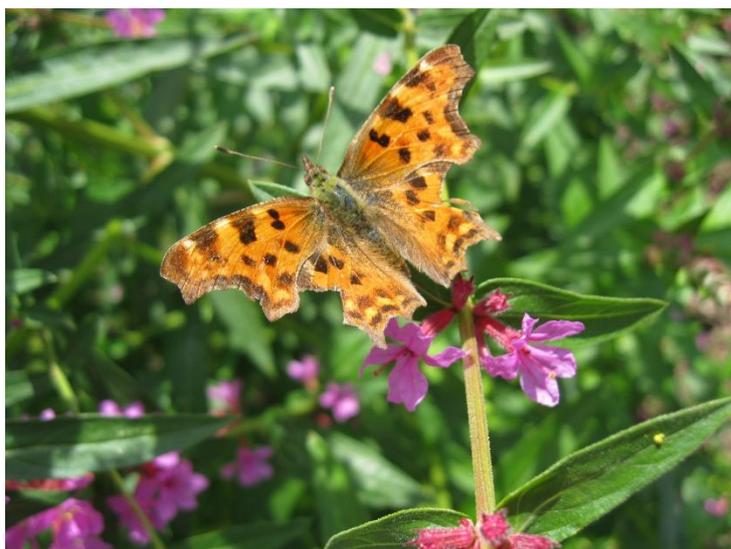
Abraham

I love Abraham, that old weather-beaten
unwavering nomad; when God called to him,
no tender hand wedged time into his stay.
His faith erupted him into a way
far-off and strange. How many miles are there
from Ur to Haran? Where does Canaan lie,
or slow mysterious Egypt sit and wait?
How could he think his ancient thigh would bear
nations, or how consent that Isaac die,
with never an outcry or an anguished prayer?
I think, alas, how I manipulate
dates and decisions, pull apart the dark,
dally with doubts here and with counsels there,
take out old maps and stare.
Was there a call at all, my fears remark.
I cry out: Abraham, old nomad you,
are you my father? Come to me in pity.
Mine is a far and lonely journey too.

Selected Poetry of Jessica Powers, edited by Regina Siegfried and
Robert Morneau [Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1989]

Some Bible readings for prayer and reflection:

John 4.1-15; Psalm 126; Mark 10.46-52; Luke 24.13-35; John 14.15-27; Ps 23



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