

****Sermon Outline - Sunday, August 1, 2021**

******Calling Out for Jubilee ****

This month, as we begin our New Roots in Nature journey, we will be exploring examples of Jubilee in nature. Last year, we looked at the 6 Rs of Jubilee: Rest, Relying on God, Reset, Release, Restore, and Rejoice! This month, we will look to the natural world around us, to notice the infinite ways that Jubilee already exists in the swimming, flying, growing, moving of the natural world.

****Scriptural Context**** -

- The Israelites face many trials after being freed from Egypt - thirst, hunger, etc. They complain to Moses, to Aaron, to God.”
- God hears their complaining. Provides food in the form of bread and quail, but instructs them to take only enough for the day and God introduces the Sabbath day.
- The Israelites often get a bad reputation, especially in Christian spaces, as lacking faith, as being unappreciative of their newfound freedom, as complaining too much and not recognizing the many ways that God has shown up, shown up, and shown up again for the Israelites.
- Today we ask the Israelites what they can teach us about Jubilee, not by what they have done wrong, or what tests they have failed - but by turning to the natural world to see what parallels and insights we might discover.

****The Indus River Dolphin****

- “Undrowned:Black Feminist Lessons by Marine Mammals” by Alexis Pauline Gumbs - “Most cetaceans have a crystalline lens over their eyes so that they can see underwater...the South Asian river dolphins do not. So they look instead with their voices. The Indus and Ganges river dolphins live in sound. They make sound constantly, echolocating day and night. In a quickly moving environment they ask where, again where, again where. The poem of the Indus river dolphin is the ongoing sound of here, a songic consciousness of what surrounds them, a form of reflective presence. Here.”
- Sophisticated sonar systems allow the dolphins to navigate through the water and to find each other and their prey.
- Pollution, poverty-induced illegal fishing practices, etc. have changed the terrain constantly for the Indus river dolphins. In the midst of the change, they continue to cry out, learning their way forward - bringing their species back from the brink of extinction.

The Israelites and the Indus River dolphin, our unlikely teachers, have three pieces of wisdom for us this afternoon:

****Cry out - again and again****. There is something sacred and powerful about naming our needs, crying out. Living into Jubilee, even on small scales, is disorienting and uncomfortable - the structures that we live in, the structures that have a heavy foot pressing on the throat of the very things that make you who you are - your softness, your queerness, your blackness and brownness, your play, your health and well being, your rest, your food sources, your creativity, the very air you breathe. Cry out. Echolocate to find nourishment and community.

****The journey to Jubilee is not linear****. Perhaps we, like the Israelites and the Indus River dolphin, are to cry out when we are thirsty, when we are hungry, when there are obstacles in our way, when we need to find one another. We know that some days, like the Israelites, we will find water, or food, or we will taste a small bit of Jubilee - that taste shall not simply quench our thirst and quiet our cries, but invite us deeper into the journey to jubilee and liberation for all beings.

****Jubilee is not about me, it is about WE****. The Israelites cried out as a collective. It was not one person who said, EXCUSE ME I AM THIRSTY, I AM HUNGRY. We collectively have needs that are not being met. We collectively are scared. The Israelites represent a whole. In the same way, the Indus River dolphin represents the health of the entire river ecosystem - the dolphin thrives when the water quality thrives, which depends on the plants holding the river banks sturdy, depends on the turtles doing their part to keep the river clean, depends on the pollution and man made disturbances like dams, etc.

****Questions****:

1. Where are you being nudged to cry out to God?
2. Who in your life encourages you to cry out when you are in need, in pain, in celebration, etc.? Who in your life receives and responds to your calls?
3. What practices of echolocation can you cultivate as we move into models of collective care?