



9/15/2020

Dear Friends of Emmanuel,

The cooler weather has arrived. The smell of Autumn is in the air and children are getting ready for school. Who of us thought that we would still be struggling with the COVID pandemic at this time? And yet here we are. I'd like to relate our present situation in the pandemic with the lessons assigned from our lectionary this week.

In the Old Testament we read the story of Jonah [*Jonah 3:10-4:11*] who got angry with God when God changed his mind and did not destroy the city of Nineveh. Jonah is frustrated and angry. Then God demonstrates to Jonah by taunting him by providing the shelter of a fig tree that God then destroys leaving Jonah suffering in the searing heat of the day. Jonah is so discouraged that he said, "please take my life from me." This *anthropomorphic* God, a God that has human characteristics responds, to Jonah's complaint, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" A simple thing that is not significant? Certainly, the great city of Nineveh is more worthy of concern than a fickle bush.

Then in the Gospel of Matthew 20:1-16, Jesus tells us a story about the 'kingdom of heaven' that is so far outside our modern idea of justice (especially labor justice) that it impedes our ability to understand.

It reminds me of the old joke – the man is hanging by a branch over a cliff. He calls out to God, "Save me!" several times. He hears the voice from above say, "Let go!" He responds, "Is anybody else up there?"

Our idea of what is fair in life is much more like the workers who worked the entire day received the same pay who only worked a few hours and complained to the landowner - like Jonah in the OT passage. Today especially, living with social distancing and so much death many of us feel anger and frustration.

What are we to understand about the nature of God from these passages? I'd like to suggest that the answer is, "Let go!" The fall from the cliff is a flight into the arms of God. There is enough to go around in God's economy. No one will be without. No one will be forgotten. God's grace and mercy are infinite. Such simple ideas, so difficult to accept.

I leave you these words to ponder as we prepare for our **Zoom service on Saturday, Sept. 19th at 5:00 pm.**

Blessings,

The Rev. Joyce Caggiano, Ph.D.

**FRIDAY NIGHT Live Zoom
Service this week at 5:00 pm
Saturday, September 19,
2020. Link below**

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/93738319614?pwd=aVZjaHhoSWtEaIorMXAxT3JOZVQzUT09>

Meeting ID: 937 3831 9614
Passcode: 142736

Coffee Hour follows our live Zoom Service. (It is not recorded.)

**After 7:00 pm on Saturday,
view the TAPED service
anytime via our YouTube
site:**

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEQm5KH2wGB_XbZ8h9JldhA

Have a comment on our service/sermon dialog? We welcome your feedback on our YouTube page. Have a question for next week? Email us at: info@emmanuelwr.org