

What if Christ is in All Of Us
Galatians 3: 26-29

Its good to sing a Christmas hymn in July
halfway between Christmases

We may be fretting about the price of everything
and the downturn in the stock market,
but Christmas brings stories of a poor savior
born in a stable,
and Bob Cratchits' family rejoicing
in each other and their modest feast,
and the Grinch realizing what matters.

What matters, we all realize at Christmas
is the most important truth that we will ever know:
God poured Godself into one like us,
and we understand
ourselves and God
and the universe
and who we can be, through him.

Just as in Jesus' time and in his life,
there is adversity and discouragement
and doubt and death,
But there is a light that has been made known to us
that nothing can erase.

That the light that was in the beginning with God
came into the world in Jesus,
and remains in the world, in us, in Christ.

That's the message at Christmas,
then why is it so hard to believe in July?

Just like how Christmas decorations seem quaint
and faintly ridiculous when left up too long,
that profound optimism,
that sense of the profound goodness of creation
can feel like a fairytale, or worse
a mocking those who suffer in the present.

We put up the title of our summer series:

“What if everything is going somewhere good,”
on the sign outside.

The idea, as you know is

to encourage an openness to a reality
beyond us, and around us,
and in us,

even in devastating times

that is leading us toward the good.

But on a week with seismic shifts

for environmental regulation, abortion,

rights of privacy,

church and state rules,

shooting death of police officers

and the migrants dying in the heat

and the bombing of Odessa,

a woman called,

left me a personal, blistering voice message

that she was so stunned by the words on our sign,

that she had to pull her car over

to get her breath,

So angry was she at our obvious obliviousness
to climate change among other things,
how dare we say
“ everything is going somewhere good.”?
when everything is going to hell.
She had even gone back, taken a picture of the sign,
and posted it to Twitter, to shared outrage.

I could hear the tremendous pain,
and it made me terribly sad.
Know that I am very sad whenever I cause you pain,
by my action or inaction.

I called her back and I thanked her for telling me,
told her I was sorry for the hurt I'd caused her,
and tried to explain our intention,
to find a greater hope
and courage
it wasn't something she could hear,
I let her know I would change the sign
since grief and anger was not what I had hoped to instill.

It's not just this year that optimism is hard to hear;
humans, including Americans
have always had reason to despair.

In the heat of the American war in Vietnam
and the brutal Civil Rights struggle
with Dr. Martin Luther King, jr
told us that *the arc of the moral universe*
is long
but it bends toward justice.

Maybe a bit overly hopeful, some thought
then, some may think now.

There is a utopian ideal in Judeo-Christianity
Wolves shall lie down with the lambs
&
They shall study war no more on all my holy mountain
&
Blessed are those who meek
for they shall inherit the earth.

and our lesson today: Paul's letter to the Galatians
that the old law which codified our ranks is obsolete
there is no language or culture
or status or gender,
there is neither Greek nor Jew
slave nor free
male or female
but all are one in Christ Jesus.

All these visions
are of a deeper , broader,
cosmic order
we see only now through a glass darkly

Divine love has poured out into creation from the beginning
and particularly in Jesus,
divine love, that word made flesh,
who did not abide by these distinctions,
who cared for men and women
gentile and Jew
and every status.

because, beyond his encounter with the Syrophenecian woman

those distinctions have no meaning to him
not reality
not really,
not in Jesus

Everything that is, as Richard Rohr says,
everything that is visible to us
is the divine outpouring of God's own self
God's being which is love:
everything, including you and I,

The Christ, in the beginning with God,
was poured out into the form of Jesus

who becomes the light of the world,
who teaches us that *we are the light of the world*

It's a struggle for us to accept that
our life, is divine light and love outpoured
Jesus saw it in us,
even Paul saw it in us.

male female
gentile jew
bound, free

there is not religion or ethnicity or nationality
or gender that can bypass or surpass this truth,
this reality.

The divine love that made us
claims all of us,
We are in Christ.
and Christ is in us, all.

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including that woman who called me

so overwhelmed,
She is right, to feel so, that is divine hurt in her,
for we have forgotten the holiness of the earth
assuming we have the some god-given right
to squander,
to destroy people and the earth
if it meets our purpose.

So, not comprehending that the planet is in essence,
love outpoured, that humanity and creatures of the earth
are outpoured
is the great sin – falsely separating ourselves
from the one who has poured out Godself
into all of us.

So, there is work to do,
our work as Christ followers, of building hope,
and faith, and love,
proclaiming , practicing
that the earth is love made visible
and that this radiant, expansive
glorious reality of divine love
That Christ is within us and around us
and that the Creator of all that is
is with us, binding us together,
sharing our joys and our sorrows
guiding us toward a better way
and all that is good news
at Christmas and in July
and every season.

Amen