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Lurking Grace

By Br. Luke Ditewig (<https://www.ssje.org/author/br-luke-ditewig/>) | June 20, 2020 | 1  (<https://www.ssje.org/2020/06/20/lurking-grace/#comments>)

We Brothers recently spent a few weeks at our rural sanctuary Emery House. I am most alive praying out in woods and fields and by water. I love to go out to the northern bluff and then down to the riverbank, especially at low tide and sunset. I am embarrassed to admit I long ignored stepping over the plastic bottles. My excuses included: “It’s not my problem. This is a big job. I just want to enjoy this place.” Something shifted in me the past few weeks. I brought gloves and bags to collect the bottles. As I began to see anew and more, I carried out rusty barrels, tires, and foam.

Though talking more about caring for the environment this year, it felt distant, both abstract and daunting. What could I really do? Collecting trash on the riverbank opens a connection. This is how I can treasure creation right here. See the beauty and the harm. I stand still to gaze and lament at the scene and admit being part of the problem. I see this as lurking grace, God surprisingly starting to change me.

When grace found me at the riverbank, protests against racial injustice and police brutality began springing up round the country. Something has shifted. We are disturbed. Perhaps the pandemic and our leaders’ varied actions increase pressure or permission for us to act differently. It can be inviting stepping up together. I am uncomfortable and disturbed, feeling more daunted and distant by racism. It’s harder to remain with the discomfort, including not knowing what to do. I am trying to listen and learn more. I appreciate Brené Brown’s podcast “Unlocking Us” especially recent conversations with Austin Channing Brown and Ibram X. Kendi. I find Peter Jarrett-Schell helpful reflecting on being White.

While I am sad these days at sickness, loss, change, murder, and injustice, I am also grateful and hopeful. Grateful for what is shifting in us, in numerous peaceful protests and rippling changes. Grateful for what is shifting in me, for surprising invitations, practical steps, and provocative voices. Hopeful because these are glimpses of divine activity echoing past experience. Jesus keeps bringing light especially where we are blind, bound in narrow perspectives, unaware of history or the impact our actions.

Each sunrise and sunset reminds me of God’s loving gaze now and steadfast presence over generations. I sense the Spirit breathing in and through us. I hear an invitation to keep returning to riverbank, going to be refreshed and going with gloves in hand to refresh that treasure. I am also invited to listen to Black voices and reflect on being White, seeking to remain with discomfort.



What has surprised you? What is shifting? What is God’s invitation for you?



We Brothers pray for you and are grateful for your sustaining friendship.

May you be surprised and empowered today with the Spirit’s lurking grace.

Gratefully,

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1 Comment

Rebecca C on June 20, 2020 at 17:44

Beautifully said.

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