

Scriptures:  
Isaiah 6: 1-8

### **Prophetic Mystics**

Essential four of creation spirituality states "Every one of us carries within us the capacity to be a mystic, to be creative, to be visionary, and to be an agent for positive change. It is our responsibility to cultivate these capacities for the benefit of Earth and all its creatures."

Our society has a tendency to project our greatest expectations or capabilities onto others, making them into heroes or celebrities. Doing so creates an excuse for us to opt out of responsibility and also assumes that we don't possess these same qualities.

When a ruler comes to Jesus and says, "Good teacher, how do we inherit eternal life?" instead of answering him directly, Jesus does what an effective leader will always do—he redirects his language. Jesus says, "Don't call me good. Only our father in heaven is good." In other words, Jesus said, "Oh no you don't. Don't set me up as the hero because then you get to opt out!" If you make it all about Jesus, where does your responsibility lie? Unfortunately, this is exactly what the early church eventually did. However, Jesus's original intent was to empower his followers to embody his teaching and ethics, to become "the body of Christ" themselves, not worship a zombie Jesus that allowed them to opt out of responsibility. We love our celebrities, our heroes, our leaders (until we don't). That is why Creation Spirituality calls us to remember and recognize that we are all potential mystics, artist, visionaries, and social justice activists. The age of celebrity needs to end. Now is the time for self-empowerment and responsibility.

It is our responsibility to cultivate these gifts for the benefit of Earth and all its creatures. We are each called to be instruments of liberation, love, and hope. It is time to reawaken mysticism, reclaim creativity, redeem the visionary wisdom, and reignite prophetic action.

We all have the capacity to stop and pay attention, to pray and be in awe and wonder. We are born with awe and wonder. Babies can spend hours looking at their fingers, they quickly smile when they see a parent or a sibling, they giggle at the sight of a dog, awe, wonder, joy is innate. We allow it to dull as we get older. When we went on our sailing trip the best part for me was watching my children be in awe and I am often in awe out in nature. When we would see a seal, or even watch the pattern of the wind and the waves (I so hoped to see an Orca because it is a magical experience every time - but we will have to do it again to get that joy). When we go for a walk or a hike I have to pull them away from the slugs and the bugs as they crouch down as study the creatures. The other day we saw a caterpillar - we could have spent hours just being there.

Next week we will take a trip up to Northern BC and I can hardly wait to show my family the road towards Alaska. When I drive that road I often have to pull over so that I don't swerve off the road gazing at the beauty. That my friends is what it is to be a mystic, to pay attention to the beauty of creation. You will notice that so many of our images for today's worship are from a place in our town that makes it easy to be a mystic. To be in awe and wonder. So often we say "it's hard to get a bad view in Squamish." That is partly why we live in a place where many people who find their solace in nature, in forms of spirituality that may not look like they have for 100's of years. And the truth is for all of us at the end it is all a mystery and being in humble awe and wonder is a good start.

It doesn't stop there for us though the being in awe and wonder of all creation also translates to us and everyone around us. The awe and love of creation is the awe and love of God that brings us to the awe and love of neighbour and self as the greatest commandment calls us to.

And when we are in that place we are called to be prophets in places of injustice for all creation. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel says we are all a prophet. We are all called to interfere with what interrupts authentic life. Matthew Fox says "The prophet is the warrior who interferes with injustice." Judy Shook says "be bold in what you offer because it is the spirit is working through us."

The more I live into these uncertain, transformational times when nothing is clear the more I understand the importance of remembering who we are. The more I am certain that loving my neighbour and seeing them as created in the image of God is the most important task in my faith. Why? Because that is what helps me live into who I am called to be as a person of faith. We are all called to live in wholeness as co-creators with God. Scripture tells us to use our God given gifts, scripture is clear that we all have them. Don't leave your gifts on the shelf it doesn't help you and it doesn't help others and it definitely doesn't bring forth the kingdom of God.

I heard a review of a book this week that I can't wait to read. "Canoeing the mountains" by Tod Bolsinger Using the story of Lewis and Clark, Bolsinger explores the kind of leadership needed in the uncharted territory of our rapidly changing cultural landscape. The Christian faith and the church particularly are finding themselves in unfamiliar territory. Bolsinger likens this to the moment Lewis and Clark climbed the Lemhi Pass, having canoed up the Missouri River, and instead of expecting to find a river on the other side of the mountain that would carry them to the Pacific, they found...mountains. They needed to exchange canoes for horses, and adapt to an "off the map" situation. And then they needed to listen to the locals to figure out how to navigate the new terrain and survive. Bolsinger suggests Christians need to let go of our Canoes and learn to listen beyond ourselves.

This rings so true to me. The fact is for all of us. The world in front of us looks nothing like the world behind us. Hear that again. The world in front of you looks nothing like the world behind you. We as a congregation built a new building but we have to get out of our familiar structure

and patterns to make that place thrive. You will hear so much more about that in the coming weeks as we live into a spirit call to create a place that offers wholeness to all.

Whether you are a member of Squamish United Church or you are just tuning in the reality is "Every one of us carries within us the capacity to be a mystic, to be creative, to be visionary, and to be an agent for positive change. It is our responsibility to cultivate these capacities for the benefit of Earth and all its creatures." There is so much happening in our world right now that calls for us to be in awe, to be creative, to be visionary and to be prophets agents of positive change. Whether it is continuing to lift up "black lives matter" and speak against the injustice committed on Jacob Blake another black man shot and injured by police in Wisconsin. Or ensuring your neighbour is getting the care they need in these Covid times. Or wearing a mask to keep your neighbour safe and stop the spread of this disease. Perhaps you are called to ensure you are keeping your workplace clean and safe, or ensure the safety of your children or elderly parents. Each of us has a call on our lives and right now that call may look entirely different than it did in February 2020. But don't leave your gifts on the shelf live into the spirit of God within you, around you and beyond you. Amen.