

**Christian Spirituality:
“Where is God as Your Day Begins?”**

Jeremiah 2:4-8

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Last Friday I attended an Advent preparation workshop at seminary in Berkeley. The season of Advent seems distant for now, but Advent is going to begin at the end of November in just two months. On the way home, I saw an interesting advertisement sign along highway 80 in the Fairfield area. The sign says, "After you die, you will meet God." It may be true, but I felt scared because the language sounds judgmental and confrontational to me rather than invitational. Another question that I had in my mind was can we see God only after we die? The answer is no! God is always with us! This morning, I am going to explore how we can experience the presence of God in our daily moments, not in heaven after we die.

When we experience God, the important key word is not “time”, but “spiritual sensitivity.” Unlike other animals and creatures on this earth, we human beings are spiritual beings. When we were born, spiritual DNA was already built in our souls. Spirituality is a connection point to God. The Old Testament wisdom reminds us that God created us in God’s image, so that we are created to perceive the Creator’s presence. Jesus in the New Testament taught us that we are children of God. Our parent God would never leave us alone! This is what Emmanuel is all about. Emmanuel simply means that God is with us! Therefore, Christian spirituality is all about practice and discipline to feel God’s presence with us at all times. In other words, we need to break our stereotypes of God. For example, God is not a metaphysical abstract philosophical concept in our minds nor does God come to us for special occasions and emergency situations. God will sit besides us when we are lonely. God is with us in our ordinary daily moments. Let me ask you a question to think about God: Where is God as your day begins? Where did you see God today? I want to share a video clip before I continue to share the mystery of God’s presence in our daily moments. It is one of TED Talks presented in 2001 by Louie Schwartzberg.

(TED TALK video clip)

Due to our busyness and hurriedness in our daily life, we forget many blessings and gifts that God has given to us. For example, do you know that 80 percent of the information we receive comes through our eyes. We are grateful for our brains that can take any electrical impulse that comes from light energy to create images in order for us to explore our world. And we are grateful that we have hearts that can feel these vibrations in order for us to allow ourselves to feel the pleasure and the beauty of nature. Unfortunately, for many gifts and blessings, we tend to take it for granted and fail to find God's touch in our daily moments.¹

As an elderly man shared his life wisdom in the video clip, today is not just another day. It's the one day that is given to you today as a gift from God. Then, surprisingly, you will realize that God is not distant or up in the air, but closely God's touch and gift is near you. When you open your spiritual eyes, you will find yourself connected with God in this beauty of nature. Nature doesn't have to be a spectacular view to capture your eyes. I want to show you another picture that I took around 6:30 a.m. last Friday morning. I meditated God's touch in this moment. I felt that God was giving me a brand new day! I felt that my eyes captured that moment. As the man reflectively shared in the video, "If you learn to respond as if it were the first day in your life and the very last day, then you will have spent this day very well." What a powerful and profound spiritual confession before God. I am not a scientist or anthropologist, but I dare to tell you a truth. If you are able to agree that today is a unique day and special gift for you from God, the Holy Spirit dwells in you and keeps you connected to God. Open your eyes to feel God's touch in your daily moments!!

Today's reading gives us an important spiritual lesson. The prophet Jeremiah delivers God's desperate message to Israel. It is simple and clear, "Do not forget God." God reminded Jeremiah of his ancestor's turn away: "Listen, I was never unfair to your ancestors, but they left me. They didn't ask, "Where's God, the God who got us out of Egypt. Your ancestors refused to ask for my help." They never thought to ask, "Where's God?" God wants to have the people of Israel turn back to him and recover love and a trustworthy relationship. They do not need God in their daily life. If we trust and love God, you need to be sensitive to God's presence in every part of your life, simply asking, "Where is God in my life?" This is the critical question that keeps us in close relationship with God.

Why don't we take the elderly man's wise advice? Begin by opening your

¹ It is one of TED Talks presented in 2001 by Louie Schwartzberg.

eyes and be surprised that you have eyes you can open and be thankful to God for the gift of a brand new day. Or just look at the sky and be amazed with clouds coming and going. When you begin your day, why don't you take a pause for a minute and curiously find anything to see God's touch and presence around you. Those may be God's extraordinary signs for you. Why don't we take this simple question for our new spiritual habit as we begin a new day? "Where is God as my day begins?" or when you come home ask this question, "Where have I seen God today?" Amen.