

God Breathed

Not right now, but when I give you the signal, I want you to take a big huge breath and hold it. When you take that big breath, be aware of your body, your head, shoulders, chest, stomach. Ready.....a real big breath and hold it....Go! Let it out. Once more ready....Go! Let it out.

What happened to your shoulders? Your chest? Your stomach?

We do it all the time...but mostly we do it wrong! And not wrong so much as, not very efficient.

Did you hear the one about the singer, the actor and the respirologists who walked into a bar? Not really. But these people will all tell you that when you take a big deep breath correctly, your stomach will distend. The shoulders don't go up. The chest does not puff out. Put your hands on your stomach for a second. I find the easiest way to do this is to exhale completely and contract your stomach muscles. When you can't pull in any more, when there is no more breath to expel, then inhale deeply through your nose and let your stomach extend. It seems

like it should be the opposite but if you are really going to use your diaphragm and fill your lungs with the most amount of air, you need to extend your stomach. This is one of the first things a singer will learn in lessons. To fill your lungs, you need to extend your stomach. We breathe in deeply through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Watch me do it once and then you join in and we will do it a couple of times together! DO IT !!!!

Practice this at home. Very odd.

So once we all start doing this correctly, how many breaths per day do you think we will take? 26,000

We know that a one litre carton of cream or milk look like. How many litres of air do you think you breath in a day? 14,000

We should breathe about 4-6 times per minute, but instead we breath between 16-20 times per minute and most of us only access about 10-20%of the available energy from the air we breathe - we could access 99%. It is certainly not that we are overly rushed and shallow people,

but our breathing is certainly too fast and too shallow. Unless you are in a meditation group or a yoga class, or taking singing lessons, do you ever even consider your breathing?

For the past few weeks, we have been talking about the Holy Spirit – the wind, the breath, the spirit of God. Do you remember the Greek word for breath or wind or spirit? Pneuma or the Hebrew Rhuah.

Remember that guy named Moses – the shepherd out in the wilderness, tending his father's flock? Exodus says that an angel appeared to Moses and that it came from flame from a burning bush, which was in fact burning but was not consumed. Out of that burning bush, God called to Moses by name. Moses, oddly enough, answered. God told him not to come any closer to the burning bush and if you wouldn't mind, would you please remove your sandals.....this dirt you are standing on is Holy Ground. He told Moses that He was the God of His father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and Jacob. Moses was afraid to look at God so he hid his face.

Then we know only too well the story of excuse making Moses.

Everything God asks him to do, Moses has an excuse.....he has to tend the sheep, he's not a good speaker, not a good leader, no one will listen to him, no one will believe him, no one will follow him. But God persists. God never give up on us. Reluctantly, eventually, Moses agrees. But then he says, "Hold on there, I don't even know your name. When they ask me who sent me, what should I say."

"Tell them the Lord your God has sent you".

In English it is L O R D . How many times do you think it appears in the Bible? 6,000 times! Originally written in Hebrew, the word for Lord is Y H V H Yod Heh Va Heh Yahvay or Yahway. In the very early days, the name of God was considered to be so sacred, so mysterious, so Holy, that it was not even pronounced. But these letter sounds were made much like the sound of breathing Yod Hay Va Hay. Breathing sounds. Unpronounceable. God's name....the sound of breathing.

Genesis tells us that when God made Adam, he took the dust from the ground and breathed life into it. The human being is God breathed.

Adam comes from Adama which means Ground man or Dirt man -

Given life, by the breath of God.

In our study on The Shack, not unlike Yod Hay Va Hay, the name for the Holy Spirit, is almost unpronounceable - Sarayu. The Spirit of God. The third aspect of the Trinity. The Spirit guides. It informs. It is always present with. The breath of God.

In recent weeks when I have talked about the presence of our amazing, mysterious God, I have talked about God somehow being within me and within you, around us, among us. Are you even willing to consider that? Consider those people in front of you and behind you , and to the side of you. Entertain the possibility, that the Spirit of God dwells in them. Think about that. And if you are willing to consider that is true – that the Spirit of God dwells in those around you, I want you to consider that that same Spirit of God, also dwells in YOU!

I think that when we breath that in, when we are willing to take a deep breath and inhale, our stomachs distending fully, the Spirit of God moves within us. One of the things about which the Breath, the Spirit informs us, is that we are walking on Holy Ground. Moses had been walking on that ground for 40 years, but it was not until he connected with God there that day, that he learned that he was walking on Holy Ground. Have you ever walked on Holy Ground? Where was that? When was that? Perhaps you felt that when you visited the Holy Land, or a cemetery, a church property, a seminary or convent. This morning on my drive in from the cottage I was very taken by this huge farmer's field, beautifully plowed, rich dark earth, the sun making shadows across it. Could that be Holy Ground? How about your own back yard? I believe that once we wake up to that same reality that Moses woke up to, that it is then, even if it lasts just for a moment, one brief God moment, it is then that we are able to see and hear God all around us. Perhaps not in a bush that burns but is not consumed. But when we have taken that deep breath in, when we have inhaled that beautiful

deep spirit, that wind of God, it is then that God lives and moves and has his being within us. It is then that we are able to see God in the midst of our daily living. It is then that we know His name. It is then that we know, we are walking on Holy Ground.

God bless you on your journey. God bless you on the dirt and the ground upon which you walk. God bless you in your breathing.

Amen