

Athelstone UCA Sunday 28th July 2019

Good morning. Thank you for giving me the privilege of sharing a little of my current understandings of life with you this morning.

First I have a statement, then I will ask you a question and I want you to take note of your first thought.

Some one you vaguely know greets you with “G’day! Then **What do ya know?**” What is your first thought? How do you reply? -----

(The immediate response was “nothing much” to which I replied Liars - you know a lot. Why are we so negative about ourselves)

Your thoughts guide your actions. What you dwell on you become.

The first Bible Readings this morning is focused on the voice from the burning bush that declares it’s name is “**I AM**”. Nothing more, nothing less. **I AM**.

Jesus used those same words many times. “I am the bread of life; I am the door; I am the light of the world: I am the way, the truth the life.

We use those same 2 little words all the time. “**I am**” I am Nola,. I am making, I am doing, I’m gonna ”. **I AM**. 3 letters of the alphabet, become 2 powerful words. “**I AM**”

Have you ever asked yourself when did the “**I am**”, that is **YOU** begin? Some say destiny, some say before you were twinkle in your mother’s or father’s eye. We sing a song “Before the world began you were on his mind”. But when did **you** become “**I am**”?

My current understanding is in that split second of conception, **you** were pure energy. You were pure light and created in the pure love of the Creator. You became one with the Creator, You became **I am!**

You are unique, you come with your own personality, your own gifts, your own purpose in life. There has never been another you and there will never be You are the Creators gift to the world. **You are God’s gift to his creation.**

After birth we start to learn how to survive in this new environment called family, and later our culture and our society. And we all experience negativity along the way.

I accept that society needs guidelines and boundaries if we, as a collective, are to survive and flourish.

But underneath all the surviving, all the learning, all the conforming, **or** the negative consequences of non conforming, all the experiences of growing up, **where** is the tiny nebulous of “**I am**”?

I am coming to understand that this “**knowing who I am is vital to my well being.** I believe all humanity is searching for this **deep heart knowing** in a myriad of ways

I share from my own experience of learning who ‘I am’ with a very condensed version of my path,

Step 1: Admitting I was lost; Admitting I was in trouble. Mentally unwell, phantom illnesses, belief I wasn’t fit to be a mother, thinking my husband and daughters would be better off without me; etc, etc. . A dark place dear friends.

Step 2: Finding some-one I could trust to talk too, share my inner most nightmare thoughts. Some-one who took me seriously and would work with me. This became many people, over many years, with me taking baby steps one at a time.

One of my early mentors told me to write a note and place it on the fridge where I would see it and say it many times each day. **“I am loveable and capable”**. Surprise! Surprise! I became more loveable and capable.

Step 3: Learning to forgive. Forgive the perpetrators of my perceived abuse/insults/slights/rejections. Hanging onto and rehearsing those negative memories keeps them alive and festering **within me**. The perpetrator probably hasn’t any idea of how I perceived their words or actions

I slowly came to understand that forgiving does not mean condoning. However when I choose to forgive I let go of the negative emotions. I no longer keep them in my heart rehearsing them over and over. I take back my power and let go of the negative. In truly forgiving I am set free.

Step 4: Forgiving myself. Now that is a big step. I now find it relatively easy to forgive others for indiscretions BUT when it comes to forgiving myself for taking on these negative beliefs , - that is much harder.

I developed a huge filing system and within this system were many thousands of files, piled high, giving proof to my negative beliefs about myself. I’m not good enough, I can never do anything right. I am hopeless. I’m useless. I have a terrible memory; If you knew what I was really like you wouldn’t want to know me. Blah! Blah! I’m sure you all have your own files.

It is very scary to let go of these files. My whole existence, my whole being was based on these beliefs. If I delete these files WHO WILL I BE? Fear/ anxiety panic attacks I would ask my husband “How can I possibly live without fear?”

While all those inner thoughts are raging, making my life hell **where is the love of God**, the divine love and light that was with me at my creation - where is that now? The conflict!!!.

Who or what am I to believe? Do I believe that the grace of God longs for me to forgive myself and be one with him? Can I trust Jesus that God is the way, the truth and will give me life in all abundance. Can this be turned around? Dare I let go? If so **How?**

The answers I have found was to change my thinking. Remember the note on the fridge..”I am loveable and capable”

I needed to learn to love and accept myself even when I fall short. Do I slip back into old habits? Yes! But the difference is now I stop myself short. No Nola. Wrong path. I see the enormity and awesomeness of creation and **know** and acknowledge the majesty of my own creation.

In Luke 10 The question What must I **do** to receive eternal life, is asked.

Jesus replied

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind. And love your neighbour as yourself.

I am taking this commandment from Jesus very seriously. I am learning to love the Creator/God **with all my heart.**

With **all my soul**;- recognizing and rejoicing that at my conception I became part of this amazing creation. His divine love has no boundaries.

With **all my strength and all my mind**: This isn't a sometime thought. It is many times a day. Giving thanks for all I am and all I have. Thanking him in advance for all he wants for me.:

I am learning to **accept myself, -love myself** How can I love others if I don't love me? To be kind to myself. To stop the negative chatter as quickly as I notice it. To care for myself. To be compassionate to me.

In Luke 10 the Religious Leader asked “What must I **do** to receive eternal life?” Jesus turns this around. It's not about doing, its about “being”.

So back to my original question at the beginning. G'Day! What do ya know?

When asked this question my reply is “That I am loved”.

The longer version is “I am Nola, a daughter of Divine Love.”

Who are YOU? Amen

Final Blessing:

This candle is but a symbol of the light of Christ.

As I blow this little light out and the smoke disperses, each one of us is to be Christ's light in our daily living.

We don't go alone. Go in the spirit of the Divine love of God the Creator, and in Jesus Christ who guides us in being.

May that grace, love, peace, and joy be with you.

Amen

Nola Pearce