



Dry Bones
Hear the Word of the Lord

Christ the King
Lent 2022 Retreat

Music: Yusuf/Cat Stevens, Father and Son
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6zaCV4niKk>
audio

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Weekly Topics

Week 1: How did we get here?

- The cataclysmic changes of modernity
- Translating between old and new worldviews
- The origin of a violent God

Week 2: Why do we suffer?

- An evolutionary and mimetic understanding

Week 3: Jesus' message of love

- The death of scapegoating

Week 4: The importance of Church

- Feeding our conscious and unconscious selves

Week 5: Living Simple Lives in a Complicated World

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Overview of Retreat so Far

1. We are evolving from a static worldview to a dynamic worldview, from looking backward to looking forward.
2. The foundation of Christian salvation is that Jesus saves us from the consequences of Original Sin.
3. Original sin consists of selfishness and mimetic rivalry which evolved from self-preservation.
4. Jesus' life, teaching, passion, death, and resurrection are all transformative lessons in evolving past mimetic rivalry.
5. The way forward is through love, not asserting our will. The Church provides the Tradition and community needed for us to evolve into the image of God.

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Living Simple Lives in a Complex World

Let's start with the Yahweh Prayer

Talking about this is tough...

- **What people want is to not suffer.**
 - Rohr defines suffering as, "not getting what you want."
 - And what do I want? What other people want.
 - "The Buddha believed that most suffering is caused by a tendency to crave or desire things."
- **If God were to keep you from suffering, God would have to manipulate the world on your behalf.**
 - Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?
- **And yet, God is active in the world.**

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Living Simple Lives in a Complex World

Jesus often taught using parables. One of the advantages of a parable is that it lowers our defenses so that we can hear something that is challenging to us.

I'm going to tell you a parable about the spiritual journey and then we'll discuss it.

The Parable of the Goldfish



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Living Simple Lives in a Complex World

1. Did the parable make sense?
2. What struck you?
3. Did anything make you recoil?
4. As I told this story, I felt the truth of it in my chest. Does that make sense to you?
5. Is life simpler when you are close to God? Why?

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The path to less suffering is to avoid rivalrous memetic desire. This cannot be done through our will (i.e., you can't desire less desiring). Instead, it is a fruit of a trusting, loving relationship with God (letting go).

God's activity comes in several flavors...

- God is constantly creating.
- God is constantly loving.
- God is constantly inviting us into relationship.

These activities are enmeshed within God's creation.

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Living Simple Lives in a Complex World

The more you and I are in relationship with God, the more loving we become.

- Love = I want what is best for you.
 - Memetic rivalry = I want what is best for me.
- The fruit of prayer is how we behave.
 - Loving God and loving neighbor become the same thing.
- Our behavior impacts the behavior of others.
- Less memetic rivalry = less suffering.

But all shall be well, and all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well."

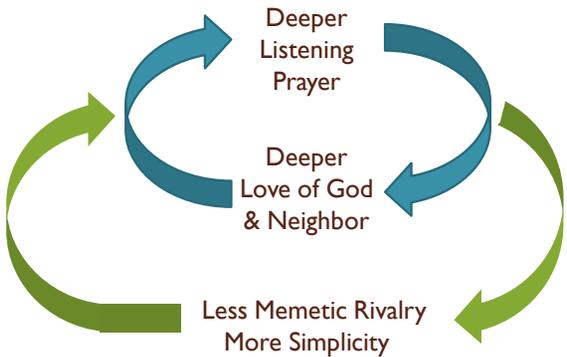
— Julian of Norwich (1342-1416)

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Deeper
Listening
Prayer

Deeper
Love of God
& Neighbor

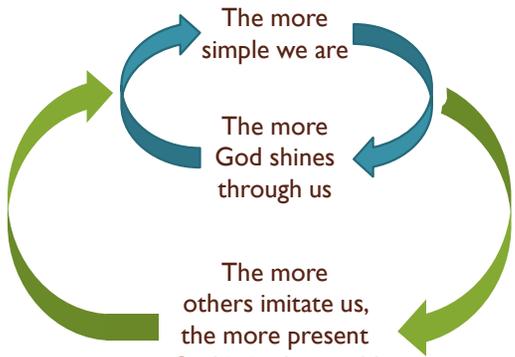
Less Memetic Rivalry
More Simplicity

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Living Simple Lives in a Complex World



The more
simple we are

The more
God shines
through us

The more
others imitate us,
the more present
God is in the world

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Living Simple Lives in a Complex World

The more you pray/love
↓
the closer you get to God
↓
the more you know ❤️ that all will be well
↓
the less you desire (suffer)
↓
the simpler your life becomes.

Afterall, you only have one thing to do. 😊

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Living Simple Lives in a Complex World
Ez 37:1-11, 12a, 14a NRSV

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know."

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Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

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Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: ... I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live..."

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Thank You!

Thanks to the team that made this retreat possible:

- The people who got the word out
- The people who organized the retreat
- The people who prepared a fantastic breakfast for us each week
- You!

Please give me some feedback!

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