

*EIGHTH SUNDAY - A - MARCH 2, 2014*

*"LOOK AT THE BIRDS IN THE SKY.....*

*LEARN FROM THE WAY THE WILD FLOWERS GROW"*

*AS I HAVE MENTIONED HERE PREVIOUSLY, I RECENTLY LISTENED TO  
THE LIFE OF WINSTON CHURCHILL...WHO WAS THE PRIME MINISTER OF  
ENGLAND DURING WW II...*

*CERTAINLY, DURING THE WAR HE FACED MANY CHALLENGES....*

*AFTER THE WAR HE MADE THIS STATEMENT:*

*WHEN I LOOK BACK ON ALL THOSE WORRIES, I REMEMBER THE  
STORY OF THE OLD MAN ON HIS DEATH BED THAT HE HAD  
EXPERIENCED A LOT OF TROUBLE IN HIS LIFE, MOST OF WHICH  
NEVER HAPPENED"*

*ISN'T THAT SO TRUE?*

*MOST OF THE THINGS WE WORRY ABOUT NEVER HAPPEN.....*

*BUT WE STILL WORRY*

*OUR READINGS TODAY SPEAK TO US ABOUT OUR TENDENCY TO WORRY A  
LOT AND NEGLECT TRUSTING IN GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE FOR US....  
ALTHOUGH NEARLY 2,000 YEARS OLD THE WISDOM IN OUR GOSPEL IS  
ESPECIALLY CURRENT AND VALUABLE....*

*ANY MODERN PSYCHOLOGIST WOULD READILY ENDORSE IT....*

*THE FIRST BIT OF ADVICE IS TO LOOK TO NATURE - LEARN FROM  
NATURE....OF COURSE, THAT MEANS YOU HAVE TO GET OUT AND BE IN  
AND WITH NATURE.....*

*THAT HAS BEEN VERY DIFFICULT FOR US THESE PAST FEW MONTHS.....  
TO GET OUT AND BE WITH NATURE IN A RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE*

*MANNER....AND LEARN FROM NATURE*

*MANY OF US ARE SUFFERING FROM CABIN FEVER.....*

*OUR ANXIETY INCREASES....*

*WE NEED TO GET OUT AND BE WITH NATURE.....*

*BUT IT IS DIFFICULT - SO WE RESORT TO*

*"THINK SPRING"....*

*HOPEFULLY, THAT HELPS US AT LEAST A LITTLE -*

*GIVING US SOME HOPE AND COMFORT....*

*I SUPPOSE THAT IS AN ADVANTAGE THAT JESUS HAD OVER US....*

*LIVING HIS WHOLE LIFE IN PRESENT DAY ISRAEL HE DID NOT HAVE TO*

*CONTEND WITH A POLAR VORTEX.....*

*PRETTY MUCH EVERYDAY HE COULD LEARN FROM THE WILD*

*FLOWERS.....*

*UNDOUBTEDLY, NATURE HAS A DARK SIDE - A POLAR VORTEX, A*

*TORNADO, A HURRICANE.....*

*BUT ITS BEAUTY AND ITS GENEROUS BENEFICENCE MORE THAN*

*COMPENSATES.....*

*AFTER ALL, NATURE, CREATION IS OUR FIRST AND PRIMARY SOURCE OF*

*REVELATION.....ISN'T IT???*

*BEFORE THE OLD TESTAMENT, BEFORE THE NEW TESTAMENT, BEFORE*

*JESUS CHRIST....*

*OUR GOD REVEALED HIMSELF, HERSELF THRU NATURE, THRU*

*CREATION AND CONTINUES TO DO SO....*

*HENCE, WE HAVE JESUS INSTRUCTING US TO PAY ATTENTION TO  
NATURE, LEARN FROM NATURE.....*

*LOOK AT THE BIRDS IN THE SKY.....*

*LEARN FROM THE WILD FLOWERS....*

*AND THERE CERTAINLY IS SOMETHING COMFORTING ABOUT NATURE,  
ISN'T THERE....SOMETHING SOOTHING ABOUT BEING IN NATURE*

*E.G. WATER...A LAKE, AN OCEAN....*

*EVERYONE WANTS TO BE NEXT TO THE WATER....*

*E.G. INDIAN LAKE OR FLORIDA.....*

*THAT IS ALWAYS THE PRIME REAL ESTATE.... WATERFRONT PROPERTY*

*IT IS NOT ONLY BEAUTIFUL, BUT ALSO SOMEHOW SOOTHING,*

*COMFORTING....*

*THE PRESENCE OF TREES, FLOWERS, GRASS.....*

*CAN BE SOOTHING AND COMFORTING....*

*TWO YEARS AGO I WAS BLESSED TO HAVE A SABBATICAL FOR THREE  
MONTHS IN JERUSALEM....*

*I LIVED RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OLD CITY OF*

*JERUSALEM.....*

*EVERY WEDNESDAY WE TOOK AN ALL DAY TRIP SOMEWHERE IN ISRAEL....*

*WE SPENT ONE WHOLE WEEK IN GALILEE - SOME 90 MILES NORTH OF  
JERUSALEM*

*AND ONE WEEK WE WENT TO THE DESERT - ABOUT 150 MILES SOUTH OF*

*JERUSALM.....*

*I CAME AWAY WITH THE REALIZATION THAT JESUS WAS MUCH MORE OF*

*A "COUNTRY BOY" THAN A "CITY BOY".....*

*HE SPENT VERY LITTLE TIME IN JERUSALEM - ALMOST ALL OF HIS LIFE  
OUT IN THE COUNTRY SIDE - MOSTLY IN GALILEE - BY THE LAKE AT  
CAPERNAUM....*

*AND I CAN SEE WHY.....GALILEE AREA IS BEAUTIFUL - EVEN TODAY -  
GREEN, WATER, HILLS, MOUNTAINS....QUIET*

*THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM CITY IS CROWDED, DIRTY, NOISY  
EVEN WHEN HE WAS IN THE CITY....HIS FAVORITE PLACE EVIDENTLY  
WAS THE GARDEN OF OLIVES - NOW AS THEN JUST OUTSIDE THE OLD  
CITY.....ACROSS A VALLEY - STILL SOMEHWAT GARDEN LIKE....*

*CERTAINLY MY FAVORITE PLACE ALSO.....*

*SO MUCH SO THAT I PURCHASED A POSTER OF MT. OF OLIVES - A VIEW  
FROM THE CITY AT THE MT. OF OLIVES.....A CHURCH - OF ALL NATIONS -  
IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES - BUT MOSTLY TREES IS WHAT YOU SEE -  
PALM TREES, OLIVE TREES - A LOT OF GREEN ON THIS MOUNTAINSIDE....*

*AND I GO THERE EVERYDAY.....IT'S IN MY ROOM ON MY WALL - WEST -  
NEXT TO A WINDOW - I FACE THEM WHEN I PRAY...*

*TO THE LEFT OF THAT I HAVE A POSTER OF GRAND TETON NATIONAL  
PARK.....JACKSON LAKE IN THE FOREGROUND AND THE GRAND TETON  
RANGE IN THE BACKGROUND.....*

*ANOTHER FAVORITE PLACE FOR ME - TRANSFORMATIVE PLACE,  
ACTUALLY....*

*I SPENT AN HOUR IN A BOAT THERE ALMOST 35 YRS AGO DURING A*

*DIFFICULT TIME OF TRANSITION - FROM GRADUATE SCHOOL IN SAN DIEGO AND BACK TO DAYTON, OHIO.....AND THAT HOUR GAVE ME THE STRENGTH OF THAT MOUNTAIN RANGE TO MAKE THE TRANSITION AND FACE A NEW SET OF CHALLENGES IN MY LIFE....*

*I RETURN THERE ALSO EVERYDAY OF MY LIFE...DURING PRAYER*

*WHAT DO YOU DO TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE WISDOM, THE STRENGTH, THE PEACE OF NATURE AND GOD'S CARE FOR YOU*

*EXPRESSED IN NATURE.....  
ESPECIALLY, WHEN YOU CAN'T BE OUT IN IT????*

*MODERN TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP US IN THIS REGARD....*

*OBVIOUSLY, PHOTOS AS I HAVE ALLUDED TO.....*

*PHOTOS OF PLACES THAT HAVE SPECIAL MEANING TO YOU.....*

*THE INTERNET CAN ALSO TAKE YOU WONDERFUL PLACES....*

*MUSIC AND THE SOUNDS OF NATURE.....*

*WE NEED TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH NATURE - IT ASSIST US, SOOTHE US, CENTER US - EXPRESSING GOD'S CARE FOR US IN NATURE....*

*WE ONLY NEED OF HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.....*

*AND ALLOW OURSELVES TO RECEIVE THE CARE, THE WARMTH, THE WISDOM, THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH WE EXPERIENCE IN THAT PLACE....*

*ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE EMBRACED BY OUR LOVING AND CARING CREATOR....*

*WE ONLY NEED TO SET ASIDE A BRIEF PERIOD OF TIME EACH TIME TO*

*GO TO THAT SPECIAL PLACE, ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE CARED FOR BY OUR LOVING CREATOR.....*