

Lead Like Water
Isaiah 55:10-11
October 20, 2019
Rev. Dr. Marcia B. Bailey, preaching

Water is essential to life. We know that. “Water makes up between 68% and 72% of the body volume (depending on gender and body composition), and it is so important that we cannot survive longer than 3 days on average without replenishment.”* Hydration effects our ability to think clearly, maximizes physical performance, regulates body temperature, aids digestion and elimination, prevents illness, improves mood and boosts energy.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/why-is-water-important>

So, we are not over stating things to say that *water is life*. Eric Law, in *Holy Currencies*, tells us that in order to continue the cycle of gifts that will make us both sustainable and missional as a community of faith, we need to cultivate “gracious leadership”. He describes that as “leading like water.”

Think about water: how does it “lead”? It flows, right? It moves from the highest point always toward the lowest point; just try tracking a leak in your roof to discover the circuitous course water can take until it finally comes to a stop. Leadership needs to be like that, Law contends, in order for us to move relationally in our community and in the world. We need to focus on “flowing”, that is, creating a movement among people and ideas that reach the people on the margins, those with the least recognized voice, so that we can play a revitalizing role recirculating the leadership and energy that is inherent there.

The scripture is interesting. “The heart of the image here is life. We are talking here about moisture-- rain and snow that come down and water. The earth is not the life-giver in this

illustration. It is the rain and snow that causes the earth to come alive, “giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater.” * When there is no water, things begin to shrivel up and die; they lose their ability to sustain life.

The text describes God’s word like this: it gives life. Without it, humankind shrivels, begins to die, struggles to be life-giving and is unable to produce abundance for all. So then when we “lead like water”, we become the bearers of the essential ingredient for life! We become the ones who carry God grace and love into the world, reaching the lowest places in our society with rejuvenating forces that allow their revival, that promote life. It is not we who bring the life, but it is the word of God that we proclaim with our lives, that brings new life: reviving each one’s ability to think, act and become all they can be.

How might we “lead like water”, offering God’s presence to the people and places who thirst the most? In your action groups, you can think about what this looks like as we continue to build relationships with our community; you can imagine this as we figure out how to extend our welcome not only to LGBT peoples but to other racial and ethnic groups in our community. In our action groups you can envision what leading like water might look like in our upcoming Christmas concert and in our music life as a whole as we embody this ideal.

Choose what speaks to you. There is an agenda for each group, a focus for you to consider. You don’t have to go to the group you went to before; you can go to more than one group even! But consider what it means to be a gracious leader in our community and in our world, to let God’s love flow to others, creating opportunity for everyone, especially those who we most

often fail to see and hear as we participate in their revival of a sense of God's gracious love to them.

*(<http://www.bethscib.com/lectionary-reflections/a-drop-in-your-cup>)