

The Sower

Bulletin & Voice of

THE FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE

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When Faith Seems to Fail

What do we do when it seems as if our faith is failing us? What do we do when we have done everything humanly possible to resolve a conflict or a trying situation in our lives? What do we do when all human avenues of resolve are exhausted? We go beyond that which is human, including our own human limitations, and we turn to God. It is during these times that we must place our egos and our pride aside and say: "God, I need help! God, I simply cannot do this alone. God, I need **You!** Help me in my poor faith!"

The Old Testament book, **Lamentations**, relates the prophet Jeremiah's time of trial and tribulation. Consider the scene. It is roughly 586 BCE. The city of Jerusalem has been left in ruins by the Babylonians. The Temple has been destroyed. The people have been ravaged by war and pestilence. Jeremiah, having lived through this personal and national catastrophe, utters words of immense lamentation. He describes Judah as a weeping widow sitting upon the ground in mourning. Everything was gone. It can't get much worse than this. With every detail of the destruction still fresh within his mind and heart, Jeremiah says the following:

"He has filled me with bitterness. He has made me drunk with wormwood. And He has broken my teeth with gravel. He has made me cower in the dust. And my soul has been rejected from peace. I have forgotten happiness. So, I say, 'My strength has perished, and so has my hope in the Lord.'" (**Lamentations 3:15 NIV**)

Does this sound familiar? Perhaps, we have never expressed it in quite this style of language, but I am sure each one of us has come to a point in life where we cry out: **My strength has perished, and so has my hope in the Lord.**

But wait. Look at what follows:

"Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. Surely my spirit remembers and is bowed down within me. This I recall to my mind; therefore, I have hope. The Lord's loving kindness indeed never ceases, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'Therefore I have hope in Him.'" (**Lamentations 3:19 NIV**)

What a testimony of transformation! What a testimony of two kingdoms - the kingdom of flesh and the kingdom of Spirit - within the individual, seeking to become one. Here was a man of immense faith who became so utterly crushed by circumstances of the flesh that even his faith in God began to diminish. Can you relate?

That's where it could have ended for Jeremiah, and that's where it often ends for us. But Jeremiah did something so profound that even the subtle language of the Old Testament proclaims its revelation with a resounding voice of hope.

What did Jeremiah do? What can we do when life seems to deal us just one too many bad hands? Jeremiah looked within and he allowed his soul to address the tragedy of the flesh. **Jeremiah** said: "My strength has perished, and so has my hope." But his **soul** embraced another call, another reality.

And that's what we must do. We must search deeply within our souls. We must look deeply into the tabernacle of the most high. We must go within and remember our spiritual roots. Why? Because we forget. We must go within and remember those times when we knew that God was with us. Why? Because we forget. We must go within and remember, as did Christ, that we and Divinity are one. Why? Because we forget.

We must go within and touch the light of the spirit and remember the greater Light of God. Why? Because there are times when we, too, “have been set adrift in a sea of darkness and despair” and our plea is: “Help me find my way home again.”

The person of Jeremiah lamented: “My strength has perished and so has my hope.” But when he reached into the depths of his soul and spirit, where the Holy Spirit of Divinity resides, Jeremiah proclaimed: “The Lord is my portion. Therefore, I have hope in Him.”

So, what do we do when the faith seems to fail us? We remember exactly wherein lie our spiritual roots. We remember that, as spirit, we are born of God. We remember that, as spirit, God is our portion. And, when the human part of us seems to fail, we remember that there is always a pathway to success. There is the spirit within upon which we can rely. There is the spirit within, created in the Light and Image of Divinity.

It matters not what your faith or religious/spiritual persuasion may be. The Great Christ Spirit speaks to all people, as do Moses, Abraham, Mohammed, Krishna, Buddha, and so many other Bearers of Light. Regardless of what you may consider your Holy Writ, they all speak of Love, Light, Faith, Forgiveness and, most importantly, the Divine Spirit within all men and women; within all animals; within all plants; within the very ground upon which we walk. God does not reside exclusively in any Church, Temple, Synagogue, Mosque, or House of Worship. He resides within the hearts and spirits of every living creature. That includes you. Never forget this!

“Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me!” That’s what we must do when our faith seems to fail us. **We must remember!** And the best way of remembering is not to forget to begin with. Thus, we have yet another reason for taking time in our busy lives to acknowledge the Light of God through the lights of our prayers, our meditations, and our fellow sojourners. Thus, we have yet another reason to welcome the Sabbath with the flames of prayer and praise. Thus, we have yet another reason for gathering together in community worship and prayer. We must never forget from whence we have all come.

As we prepare to welcome the wondrous season of Light and Promise - Advent, Chanukah, and

Christmas - let us remember the challenges of the prophet Jeremiah; for, indeed, he represents each one of us.

“The Lord is my portion. Therefore, I have hope in Him!” What an Epiphany!

Rev. Simeon

Battle Fatigue

There is no doubt that we are in stress-filled times. Between COVID, political upheaval, the threat of white male supremacy, climate change, etc., many of you may be experiencing what can only be called “Battle Fatigue”. It’s exhausting and depletes us of energy that could be directed to something more productive.

So, how do we deal with Battle Fatigue?

Prayer: The most potent gift of the Spirit is prayer. Pray for the Human family, our Blessed Mother Earth, and for yourself.

Meditation: Just as prayer is the most powerful gift of the Spirit; meditation is the most important tool of the Spirit. Through meditation, we attune to our Soul Star and to Divinity. We are then given clarity concerning what we can do to help relieve stress.

Action: If you are not happy with whatever is within and/or around you, then do something about it. Prayer and meditation are useless unless followed through with some type of tangible action on your part; be it change of attitude, self-improvement, engaging in some type of community, or daring to take another step in your journey. **Action is necessary!**

Trustee Appointment

We are pleased to announce that James Wesley Amburn was officially appointed as Trustee of the First Spiritual Temple Trust on October 12, 2021. This appointment marks Phase One of the process of filling the three seats on the Board of Trustees. Phase Two - filling the third seat - should be completed by mid-November.

James will not only be a fine fiduciary; he will also be a great asset both to the church and to Marcellus Ayer’s vision.