



Servants of Christ
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Devotion for the first week of September

Two Birds Never Sing the Same Song

Romans 13:9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

This week’s scriptures (Exodus 12:1-14, Matthew 18:15-20, and the above) have the importance of community as a common theme. Exodus describes Passover which occurred because the Pharaoh treated the Israelites horribly. Matthew describes how to settle conflict in community. Community is important to God because relationships are important to him. At the end of the day, if we don’t live well in community what do we have? At the same time, scripture tells us that living with one another can be difficult—problems arise, conflicts, resentments, misunderstandings.

Did you know that two birds never sing the same song? And yet they live in beautiful community. I offer you the Hermit Thrush or as sometimes called, the American Nightingale: brown feathers with a speckled chest and rusty tail feathers.

The hermit thrush loves to sing. Often it is the last bird singing at dusk and the first to sing in the morning. They ‘winter’ in Florida (or southeast) and ‘summer’

in New England. When they arrive in the spring, the females settle down with a mate. Together they build a nest as a home. The female lays eggs and male brings 'take out' consisting of caterpillars and insects. After 12 days the eggs hatch with featherless creatures and closed eyes. Their parents feed them so well that they have grown feathers in just 9 days. Three days later, the young are able to leave the nest.

It is a beautiful community. The parents encourage the young by flying to a different branch with food in their mouths. The young fly to mama and daddy and are rewarded with the yummy lizard or other treat. Even though the young can fly away at this point, they continue to be a familial community. The parents continue to feed them and teach them to get their own food by turning over leaves and scratching up the ground to find an insect.

The male has a catalog of 7 to 13 songs, but the female has shaped those songs over thousands of years. After all, that is how the female chooses who will be the daddy. All the songs are based on the same scales found in human music.

God has created us for community. And if we look at the humble hermit thrush, it is also possible. And it is so important that Matthew 18:17 says that those who have been given a chance to turn around and refuse to do so are not to be permitted in the community. Paul says that as well. And Pharaoh learned this the hard way as the Israelites listened to God and obeyed. And they still celebrate Passover to this day.

Perhaps no two people sing the same song as well. That's ok. Let's listen to the songs of others. May our songs nurture and build our families and communities. It is why God created us. If hermit thrushes love each other, then so can we.

Prayer:

God related in infinite community in Trinity, help us to see the marvelous ways you have created the world. We were made for love. Help us to reflect on the ways that we put up barriers and obstacles to such love. Forgive us as we try to turn around. Heal us and heal our little planet. In Christ's name. Amen