

"And so we leave God to act in everything, reserving for ourselves only love and obedience to the present moment. For this is our eternal duty. this compelling love, steeped in silence, is required of every soul... Pure, simple and sure, it is a straight path along which souls walk with courage and faith, looking neither to the right nor to the left, unconcerned with everything else... Nothing is more secure than this straightforward way, as there is nothing clearer, easier, sweeter or less subject to terror and illusion."

~ Jean Pierre De Caussade, The Sacrament of the Present Moment

This week I am relearning the lessons revealed in the Book of Ruth as we do our annual Vacation Bible School at the church. On the surface, this is a great story of loyalty, compassion and the steadfast love shown in the lives of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz. But when you get to the end of the story and it is revealed that Ruth becomes the great-grandmother of King David through her son Obed, another level of Chesed ("Steadfast love) is apparent.

"A further theme... is God's providential ordering of human life. The author of Ruth could see part of God's purpose for human history being fulfilled in David; the Christian reader can fit the part into the whole, for God was executing a plan to redeem humankind through great David's greater son. The author of Ruth was also aware of God's hand upon the personal circumstances of families and individuals, encouraging them to look back over events to trace the mysterious outworking of God's overflowing goodness in their lives. The events speak for themselves. In personal life and in history God was working out His good purpose." ~ New Bible Commentary, Inter Varsity Press

I don't know what the 5th and 6th graders in our class are getting from the lessons and activities we're doing. I know they are having fun and seem to be engaged by the story. But I can assure you that my old heart and mind are once again being challenged by our compassionate God to learn to trust Him and to wait patiently for His purposes to be revealed!

It's certainly not too late for me to learn to focus on "love and obedience to the present moment", moving forward with the kind of confidence and trust in God that Naomi, Ruth and Boaz exhibited in their lives so long ago.

May we all walk the "straightforward way" this week as God's people, rejoicing in the sacrament of the present moment. Under God's Mercy, Howie

Midweek Reflection # 11 ~ "A Straightforward Way"