

Good Morning, be blessed this wonderful morning,

SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 4:22-24 (CEB) – Larger reading: Ephesians 4:12-27 “*Change the former way of life that was part of the person you once were, corrupted by deceitful desires. Instead, renew the thinking in your mind by the Spirit and clothe yourself with the new person created according to God’s image in justice and true holiness.*”

STORY: by Jean L. Pelegrino

Long ago, when the world was very new, there was a certain lobster who was determined that the Creator had made a mistake. So he set up an appointment to discuss the matter.

"With all due respect," said the lobster, "I wish to complain about the way you designed my shell. You see, just as I got used to one outer casing then I have to shed it for another. Very inconvenient and rather a waste of time."

To which the Creator replied, "I see. But do you realize that it is the giving up of one shell that allows you to grow into another?" "But I like myself just the way I am," the lobster said. "Your mind's made up?" the Creator asked. "Indeed!" the lobster stated firmly. "Very well," smiled the Creator. "From now on, your shell will not change and you may go about your business just as you do right now." "That's very kind of you," said the lobster and left.

At first, the lobster was very content wearing the same old shell. But as time passed, he found that his once light and comfortable shell was becoming quite heavy and tight. After a while, in fact, the shell became so cumbersome that the lobster couldn't feel anything at all outside himself. As a result, he was constantly bumping into others. Finally, it got to the point where he could hardly even breathe. So with great effort, he went back to see the Creator.

"With all due respect," the lobster sighed, "contrary to what you promised, my shell has not remained the same it keeps shrinking!" "Not at all," smiled the Creator, "your shell may have gotten a little thicker with age, but it has remained the same size. What happened is that you changed - inside, within your shell."

The Creator continued, "You see, everything changes continuously. No one remains the same. That's the way I've made things." "That's very sensible," said lobster. "If you like," offered the Creator, "I'll tell you something more." "Please do," encourage the lobster.

"When you let go of your shell and choose to grow," said the Creator, "you build new strength within yourself. And in that strength you'll find new capacity to love yourself - to love those around you - to love life itself. This is my plan for each one."

OBSERVATION:

Growth comes with change. Some change comes naturally and is easy, but for most of us change of any kind is painful. Change is so necessary in the full scope of the Kingdom of God. Actually, change was one of the insightful design features for which we ought to be thankful to God for including it.

To be painfully honest, we don't like to change because we get comfortable with old habits and so, we become spiritually fat... sluggish ... lazy ... complacent ... filled with apathy. And over the years we begin to die inside, weighted down by old thoughts and ideas, but that's not the way God has planned it.

God's idea was for us to throw off everything that holds us back from becoming everything that he has created us to be. Hebrews 12:1-2 reads in part: "*... let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*"

I don't know about you, but I'm in it to win it! Getting rid of the old ways and old thoughts, isn't easy, but it sure is freeing ... especially when I can stop defending the "way we use to do it". If this Pandemic has taught us anything it is new ways of living and doing. Yes, there is much about Covid that has been hurtful, but in the process we have made new discoveries. A new day has dawned upon us if we like or not. So, now, let us move on to glory, embracing the new day which the Lord has created for us to enjoy.

QUOTE:

"Everything continues in a state of rest unless it is compelled to change by forces impressed upon it." - Isaac Newton

PRAYER:

Give us new eyes to see, give us new ears to hear and give us a fresh spirit with which we can enjoy the new day that you have given to us.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim

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