

Steek èrens in jou woonplek 'n kers aan terwyl jy lees.

Tema: Familiedinamika en God se voorsienigheid

Skriflesing: Genesis 37:1-4 en 12-28

Broodjies vir die pad

“Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but ... life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves.”

— Gabriel García Márquez

In beeld, vlugtig

In die afloop van 'n bestemde dag sal ons aan die planeet ontheg, met vlerkgeklap in die laatson verby die beurtsange van lig en skaduwee aanbeweeg.

Soos swerfskulpe sal ons in die ruim die gesels van seë optel en ons al wentelend instem op die akkoorde tussen sfere.

Ons sal asem word, in somernagte 'n sweem van wind, en op die gevonde ritme van lugstrome mekaar vind en weer in mekaar verloor tot dit om ons lig word soos die eerste dag.

Zandra Bezuidenhout, 2020

“Hard times build determination and inner strength. Through them we can also come to appreciate the uselessness of anger. Instead of getting angry nurture a deep caring and respect for troublemakers because by creating such trying circumstances they provide us with invaluable opportunities to practice tolerance and patience.”

— the Dalai Lama

“Build houses and make yourselves at home. You are not camping. This is your home; make yourself at home. This may not be your favorite place, but it is a place. Dig foundations; construct a habitation; develop the best

environment for living that you can. If all you do is sit around and pine for the time you get back to Jerusalem, your present lives will be squalid and empty. Your life right now is every bit as valuable as it was when you were in Jerusalem, and every bit as valuable as it will be when you get back to Jerusalem. Babylonian exile is not your choice, but it is what you are given. Build a Babylonian house and live in it as well as you are able. Put in gardens and eat what grows in the country. Enter into the rhythm of the seasons. Become a productive part of the economy of the place. You are not parasites. Don't expect others to do it for you. Get your hands into the Babylonian soil. Become knowledgeable about the Babylonian irrigation system. Acquire skill in cultivating fruits and vegetables in this soil and climate. Get some Babylonian recipes and cook them. Marry and have children. These people among whom you are living are not beneath you, nor are they above you; they are your equals with whom you can engage in the most intimate and responsible of relationships. You cannot be the person God wants you to be if you keep yourself aloof from others. That which you have in common is far more significant than what separates you. They are God's persons: your task as a person of faith is to develop trust and conversation, love and understanding. Make yourselves at home there and work for the country's welfare. Pray for Babylon's well-being. If things go well for Babylon, things will go well for you. Welfare: shalom. Shalom means wholeness, the dynamic, vibrating health of a society that pulses with divinely directed purpose and surges with life-transforming love. Seek the shalom and pray for it. Throw yourselves into the place in which you find yourselves, but not on its terms, on God's terms. Pray. Search for that center in which God's will is being worked out (which is what we do when we pray) and work from that center. Jeremiah's letter is a rebuke and a challenge: “Quit sitting around feeling sorry for yourselves. The aim of the person of faith is not to be as comfortable as possible but to live as deeply and thoroughly as possible—to deal with the reality of life, discover truth, create beauty, act out love. You didn't do it when you were in Jerusalem. Why don't you try doing it here, in Babylon? Don't listen to the lying prophets who make an irresponsible living by selling you false hopes. You are in Babylon for a long time. You better make the best of it. Don't just get along, waiting for some miraculous intervention. Build houses, plant gardens, marry husbands, marry wives, have children, pray for the wholeness of Babylon, and do everything you can to develop that wholeness. The only place you have to be human is where you are right now. The only opportunity you will ever have to live by faith is in the circumstances you are provided this very day: this house you live in, this family you find yourself in, this job you have been given, the weather conditions that prevail at this moment.”

— Eugene H. Peterson, *Run with the Horses: The Quest for Life at Its Best*

“Any father...must finally give his child up to the wilderness and trust to the providence of God. It seems almost a cruelty for one generation to beget another when parents can secure so little for their children, so little safety, even in the best circumstances. Great faith is required to give the child up, trusting God to honor the parents’ love for him by assuring that there will indeed be angels in that wilderness.”

— Marilynne Robinson

“Ecclesiastes names thee Almighty, the Maccabees name thee Creator, the Epistle to the Ephesians names thee Liberty, Baruch names thee Immensity, the Psalms name thee Wisdom and Truth, John names thee Light, the Book of Kings names thee Lord, Exodus names thee Providence, Leviticus Sanctity, Esdras Justice, creation names thee God, man names thee Father; but Solomon names thee Compassion, which is the most beautiful of all thy names.”

— Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

“I think the attempt to defend belief can unsettle it, in fact, because there is always an inadequacy in argument about ultimate things.”

— Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*

“All bread is the bread of heaven, her father used to say. It expresses the will of God to sustain us in this flesh, in this life. Weary or bitter or bewildered as we may be, God is faithful. He lets us wander so we will know what it means to come home.”

— Marilynne Robinson, *Home*

“I want to find a way of speaking to fellow human beings that will be cool rather than heated, philosophical rather than polemical, that will bring enlightenment rather than seeking to divide us into the righteous and the sinners, the saved and the damned, the sheep and the goats.”

— J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*

“In a world of chance is there a better and a worse? We yield to a stranger’s embrace or give ourselves to the waves; for the blink of an eyelid our vigilance relaxes; we are asleep; and when we awake, we have lost the direction of our lives. What are these blinks of an eyelid, against which the only defence is an eternal and inhuman wakefulness? Might they not be the cracks and chinks through which another voice, other voices, speak in our lives? By what right do we close our ears to them?”

— J.M. Coetzee, *Foe*

“You can kiss your family and friends good-bye and put miles between you, but at the same time you carry them with you in your heart, your mind, your stomach, because you do not just live in a world but a world lives in you.”

— Frederick Buechner

Brood vir die pad

Geregtigheid en solidariteit vra dié soort nabyheid

As ons reg oor geregtigheid wil praat, moet ons begin by mense se konkrete ervarings van verontregting.

Die Gereformeerde filosoof Nicholas Wolterstorff het dié gedagte in talle publikasies oor dekades heen onderstreep, onder meer in sy *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (2008) en *Journey toward Justice: Personal Encounters in the Global South* (2013).

Wolterstorff se punt is dat wanneer ons nie die roep van die slagoffers van onreg kan hoor of daarop ag gee nie ons maklik verlei word om te dink dat sekere mensonterende optredes of stelsels eintlik nie so erg is nie. Ook die gesprek oor menseregte (“human rights”) moet volgens hom met die erkenning van “human wrongs” begin.

Hierdie fokus wat die partikuliere pyn van die verontregtes en lydendes as uitgangspunt neem, het betrekking op baie van die gesprekke waarmee ons vandag goed vertrou is.

“Black lives matter,” weerklink die kreet. Waarop baie reageer: “Alle lewens maak saak.” “Stop plaasmoorde,” pleit die familie en vriende van die slagoffers. Waarop die haastige reaksie van sommige volg: “Alle geweld moet veroordeel word.” “Beëindig die geweld teen vroue,” word daar geprotesteer ná die hoeveelste verkragting of insident van huishoudelike geweld. Wat sommige noop om gou te wil byvoeg: “Maar mans is ook slagoffers.”

’n Gereformeerde geloofsbelydens wat in die 1980’s in die konteks van apartheid ontstaan het, bely dat God “op ’n besondere wyse die God van die noodlydende, die arme en die verontregte is.” Wat sommige dadelik laat protesteer: “Maar God is tog ook die God van die rykes en bevoorregtes.”

Ja, daar is waarheid daarin dat alle lewens saak maak, dat alle geweld veroordeel moet word en dat God die God van alle mense is. Maar wat hierdie algemene waarhede soveel emosionele reaksie by verontregtes en slagoffers laat ontlok, is waarskynlik die gevoel dat die haastige uitspraak daarvan juis die eiesoortigheid van húl pyn en menswees ontken. Dit kommunikeer vir diegene met seer dat jy ver van hulle af is. Geregtigheid en solidariteit, kan ons sê, werk nie met afstandsheer nie. Dit vra vir die nabyheid van liggaam en hart.

Nadat sy seun in ’n bergklimgeluk dood is, het Wolterstorff *Lament for a Son* (1987) geskryf. Hierin merk hy op dat dié wat vanaf ’n afstand wil troos met algemeenhede nie vir hom in sy rou help nie.

“What I need from you,” skryf hy, “is that you recognize how painful it is. To comfort me, you have to come close. Come sit beside me on my mourning bench.” – RRV

<https://www.netwerk24.com/Stemme/Sielsgoed/geregtigheid-en-solidariteit-vra-die-soort-nabyheid-20200731>

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