



Monday Musing: June 24th, 2024.
Pruning...

I love the forest, as you know, and I would love my backyard to be like a forest – wild and free! To some degree, I have managed this. My backyard has large trees, tall trees, and bushes. There are several raspberry bushes and the big one with the purple flowers (lilac?), oh and apple trees too. I love how unruly they all are,

spreading across the backyard. The squirrels, blue jays, robins, rabbits, and chipmunks seem to love them too. I get to watch them run through the branches, hopping from bush to tree, especially from the apple tree to the evergreen, the one the kids called the Christmas tree. I also get to watch the blue jays as they pick their morning or afternoon raspberries. Oh, and then there is the rhubarb buried but growing under the other raspberry bush. Apparently though, my lovely wild bushes are supposed to be pruned. Whatever for?

So, I looked up pruning. The dictionary says pruning is the act of cutting away dead or overgrown branches or stems to increase fruitfulness and growth. It says it is to reduce the extent of superfluous or unwanted parts. But I want all the parts! Maybe my backyard needs trimming instead.

So, I looked up trimming. The dictionary says trimming is to cut off small pieces. Oh, this sounds so much better – except maybe for the lack of fruitfulness part.

I guess this means if I want raspberries and purple flowers to continue to grow, “be fruitful and multiply,” then I need to do the pruning. If I just want to tidy up loose ends, then it’s a trimming.

The same goes for other things, I’ve learned. My supervising professors of my doctoral thesis said I’m at the pruning and editing stage right before submitting, September 1, to request a thesis defence committee. So, as I see it, if I prune my thesis, then I make it able to produce more...well maybe it makes the fruit-bits of information stand out more. And editing...well I think that must be like trimming...trimming down where I might have repeated a thought that doesn’t need to be emphasized quite that much.

So, prune and trim the bushes...prune and edit the thesis. Hmm... I think there’s more to this.

We’re entering the summer and a time when there might be a lot of snipping to be done. We’re all entering this wonderful time of relaxing and renewing. It is also a time to spend in the quiet, contemplating our lives, thinking on where we have been this past year, and what the new year ahead will look like. September for me has always been the new year. School

starts in September. The church winds up again in September. Life just gets busier come September. So, what possible snipping could be needed to help us get ready? What do we need to prune, trim, or edit in our lives so that come September, and into the fall and winter, our lives will be less wild, less busy, less repetitive, and more...fruitful?

What do we personally need to limit or revisit in our daily lives to make more room for joy? What do we need to limit or revisit in our church life together, to make more room for ... well...God?

Our lives at home and in the church are busy. Summer is the time to itemize, size up the bushes around us, and determine which aspects of our lives need to be pruned, trimmed and edited. What do we let go? What do we change? What do we open for newness or fruitfulness to grow, that will enrich our lives?

May your summers be days of blue skies, white clouds, beautiful flowers, and prayerful thoughts through which love and happiness might bloom into faithful and hopeful plans for the fall.

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Prayer

Holy God, of what was, what is and what will be,
Guide us each night and each day, as we flow through the weeks of summer,
That we might discern what needs to be left behind this fall,
What needs to be kept and treasured, and what needs to be reshaped,
renewed, even created, and Holy One, take us onto the path you call us to follow
Faithfully, courageously, with and within your Love
Made known through the Christ. Amen.

Scripture

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27	David's lament for Saul and for Jonathan.
Psalms 130	Out of the depths, I cry to God.
2 Corinthians 8:7-15	Excel in generosity.
Mark 5:21-43	A young girl is raised, and a hemorrhaging woman healed.

TR Question (Theological Reflection)

How are you experiencing God from day to day? How do you hope to experience God in new ways through the summer and into the fall? What will make this happen?