

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, October 14, 2020. Thank you so much for tuning in and for taking this time out of your day to focus on God and focus on your faith.

I don't know about you but I have found the fall colors this year to be absolutely, unbelievably stunning. I mean honestly, I cannot remember a year where the trees have been this vibrant and seeing the colors progress and get brighter and fill the spaces around us, it's so gorgeous. And what an absolute gift it is to have this beauty surrounding us.

For me though, these incredible colors and the joy that comes with the gorgeous fall gets at something deeper than just some beautiful scenery. I was having an outdoor lunch with my mentor earlier this week and we shared just how overwhelming this year has been, and how being stressed and over functioning like this can sometimes lead us to being kind of burnt out or apathetic or just straight up exhausted on many levels. This year has just been SO MUCH. But honestly? One part of this year that I don't want to overlook or forget is the fall colors, that they bring SO MUCH beauty, and that's one SO MUCH that I don't want to forget. I looked at my mentor while we were chatting, gestured to the trees around the patio on which we were seated and just breathed out what the Holy Spirit had filled my heart with, "Creation is still good."

And that's what it is, creation is still good. God made all of us, all the world around us, all of creation for all time and place and God called creation good. As God breathed us and this windy, wild world into life God called us good. And yeah, this year is honestly too much for any of us to handle. This is not me ignoring or belittling the very heartbreaking realities we have all had to face to at least some degree over this past year. But our help in handling it, which we are!, comes from God, who fills our hearts with hope that new life will still rise up every single day. God created this world, this year, these people, everything. We need only to look at these hills bursting with color and the end of their leafy lives to know that there is still beauty and goodness to be found in the midst of it all. Sometimes it's a little moment of a deep breath of crisp air, and sometimes it's the overwhelming gratitude we have for the people in our lives who bring us joy. But in the end, creation is (still) good. And thanks be to God for that truth.

Our Psalm today starts with a question that I feel like many of us are asking - when will this end? Where will I get help with this? And the answer to that question comes in the rest of the Psalm. God's got us. Our help comes from God who made us and creation and even goodness itself. We need only to look at the hills around us - the rolling banks of the river, the fields and forests for hiking and playing, the boldness outside our windows as we drive and ponder, the fresh air and gorgeous colors as we walk around our neighborhoods. Praise be to God for these gifts of creation. This is Psalm 121.

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
2 My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.

4 He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.

8 The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

The Word of the Lord.

Please join me in prayer:

God our creator, our redeemer, our sustainer, for your creation we give you thanks. For all these your gifts which you call good, we give you thanks. Help us in the midst of our struggles, our sorrows, our pain and missteps and apathy and burnout, to see little pockets of your goodness throughout our day. Your goodness doesn't take away the hurting, O God, but these reminders of your goodness, your love, and the way you keep us close help to give us moments of hope and strength. Help us to have hope and strength today and in these days ahead. We pray for the protection and health and well-being of ourselves, the people we love, and our neighbors around us. In the name of your Son Jesus we pray, Amen.

Go in peace dear friends, have a beautiful, good day. Amen.