

A few years ago I listened to an interview with scientists at the Perimeter Institute in Waterloo, Ontario on *The Current*. The Perimeter Institute specializes research into understanding of the fundamental laws of nature. I was struck by the passion they had for their work as theoretical physics. One scientist said, “The laws of nature are mysteriously beautiful. People around here want to be a part of understanding where that road is going and why it is that way. It turns out that what physics is discovering that the laws of nature are incredibly beautiful and it does not have to be that way. It’s sort of a mystery.” (CBC, *The Current*).

That search to understand is not only a scientific pursuit, but one we can all engage in as we attempt to understand the mysteries of life, of love, of faith and nature. No book of the bible engages in this search better than the book Psalms filled with both beautiful poetry and the true search to understand both life and how God is at work in the world. There is a Psalm for every occasion and it is one of the few books of

the bible that reflects a wide range of human experience.

Psalm 40 is reflects on themes of survival and discipleship. The writer of Psalm has clearly been through a difficult ordeal. The psalmist says, “You lifted me out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay and set my fee upon a rock, making my steps secure. You put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.” U2 in their song simply called 40 offers this version of the Psalm:

“I waited patiently for the Lord
He inclined and heard my cry.
He brought me right out of the pit,
out of my miry clay.

I will sing, sing a new song” (U2, 40)

“I waited patiently for you, O God” says the psalmist. Not an easy task! Patience can be hard to come by. Whether it is patience with other people or with children who won’t cooperate or dealing with difficult situations, patience is hard. He waited in faith that God would act. And God responded, life returned to normal, as U2 sings, “He set my feet upon a rock and let

my footsteps be heard.” It can be hard in the moment to name when God is at work in your life. Sometimes, it is only when you are firmly planted on solid ground and you gaze through the rear-view mirror that you can see what God has done. The Psalmist does just that and finds beauty in God’s presence during the time of struggle. He sings, “O God, my God you have multiplied your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us, none can compare with you!”

With our feet planted on solid rock again. We are invited to follow in ever new ways.. The psalmist sings, “But you have opened my ears to hear and I said: “Here I am.” God’s invitation to us each day, to respond in faith saying, “Here I am.”

And even as we respond in faith sometimes it can take a lifetime to know whether or not it’s made a difference. This is certainly true for one man who sent a letter to a Sunday School Teacher after many years. He wrote from his hospital bed: "You probably do not remember me, but I visited your Sunday School class back

in 1978 when I was staying with my grandparents during the summer. You were very kind to me and you said something that day which led me eventually to ...become a Christian. The reason I am writing you now is to say thanks, because my faith is very important to me. You see, I have cancer." Well, the woman was very touched by the story but the problem was that she did not have the faintest idea who this person was. She had no recollection at all of anything extraordinary happening in Sunday School in the summer of 1978, so being a diary keeper - she went to her diaries and looked up the entries for the Sundays of that summer. On the fourth Sunday of July in 1978, she found this entry: "I was tired this morning and I did not feel well but I went on to church and to Sunday School just the same and I taught my class of little boys. There was one in particular who was a real handful. He was a visitor and he could not sit still. I sat beside him and tried to give him a little extra attention. I don't know whether it did him any good or not." (www.goodpreacher.com)

All around us there are people who do small acts of kindness that have a big impact on people's lives. God's call to each of us is not always to take on huge projects but by offering a helping hand, being present to offer encouragement or giving extra attention we can change peoples' lives. Each day, God invites to respond in faith to the invitation to follow by saying "Here I am." Amen.