

## HEARTBEATS – Staying Connected 9/24/2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

When our first daughter was born, I remember the thought that immediately popped into my head: “Oh, she’s not a boy.” Fortunately, in the very next instant, I realized that if she had been a boy, I would have been thinking, “Oh, he’s not a girl.” Perhaps it’s human nature, but we never seem to be happy with what we have or with what we are given. We always want more, or bigger, or better, or different.

The story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2 is a good illustration of this. This wonderful garden is full of “trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.” And God says, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” All of the trees in the garden are yours to enjoy except one. So, of course, that’s the tree that is desired. Think about it. Every single tree and fruit, except one. A multitude of produce to live on and be happy to have. Instead, though, it is the one that they don’t have that is the one they focus on.

Again, we do the same thing. We compare ourselves to others, looking at what they have and we don’t, and then wishing we had it to. We constantly want things that we desire for ourselves, rather than being pleased with what is already ours. It’s never enough or good enough or the way we want it. And truth be told, when we are gifted with something, even if it is from God, we find ourselves dissatisfied, often without even being able to say what it is that we didn’t get.

The challenge for us as people of God is to turn our focus away from the things we don’t have and instead to look at what we do have. We need to concentrate on counting our blessings—the things we have received from God—and then praise God for those things. It can be difficult in a world that tells us that there are things that will make our lives better or happier or easier. (And you can debate whether that is really true. The one thing for certain is that if you buy into what is being offered—literally buy in—those telling you this is what you need will be happier from receiving the money you spend.) Yet when we look at what God has given us, and make the effort to give thanks for what we have, we will find a new sense of satisfaction and peace. So many trees and so much fruit. How different would things be for human beings if we could concentrate on how lavishly God has blessed us, instead of on what we think it is that we believe we are lacking. God isn’t interested in making sure we have what we want; God’s concern is giving us exactly what we need.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey