A BIBLICAL REFLECTION ON VACCINATIONS

Genesis 8:6-13

An old story caught my attention as I wrestle with a biblical response to a global pandemic that has left us isolated and concerned about our existing health. In the book of beginnings, which we know as the book of Genesis, we see Noah facing humanity's challenge of the flood! He did indeed survive the flood but needed to know how to move forward and to rebuild a life.

Listen to the words of scripture in Genesis 8:6-13:

6 After forty days, Noah opened a window he had made in the ark 7 and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. 9 But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth, so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. 10 He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. 11 When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. 12 He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him. 13 By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry.

Interesting that Noah used the instruments that he had at his disposal to discern how to end what I would consider a world pandemic. Noah released a raven and dove from the ark at different times. The goal in sending these birds was to determine if the floodwaters had abated enough for Noah and his family to exit the ark. The use of these birds was the science of his day. A dove would return to its point of origin if the dove found no dry land. A raven would eat on the dead carcass once found upon the ground.

Today, we have evolved above and beyond Noah's days, but pandemics still find residence within our human lives. Noah used the science of a raven and dove to discover when life must progress. And today is no different; we are challenged to use the science that we have at our disposal to discern how to end this pandemic and when it is safe to return to our new normal.

I recognized that it is not that simple because this pandemic is complex, and so is our history with science as it has not always been kind to our community. Science has been used for cruelty and horrific acts against the people who have been kissed by nature's sun! We have been abused in the name of science. We have been inflicted as people of color for the sake of medical progress. Who can forget the Tuskegee syphilis experiment and the infamous "HeLa" cells, cancerous cells stolen from Henrietta Lacks without her family's consent! We shall not forget!

However, we cannot allow the same history that hurt our people, become the shackles we wear to fight a virus that has been the most significant proponent of health disparity and death within our community. As hurtful as it is, our history is local, and the pandemic is global, ravaging nations across our globe. In the United States, 400,000 plus have died, and the number is still rising as I pen this statement.
We need a Noah like faith and desire to restore the land and offer the opportunity to live free of masks, death, and COVID 19 disease. We don't have a raven or dove to let us know that it is time to move beyond the pandemic, but we do have vaccines that will give us hope of a day beyond the floodwaters of fear and demise. I encourage you to read and educate yourself on the different vaccines offered to the public. Our calling in this conversation is to equip you and encourage you to think critically about the vaccine and the positive effects on our day to day lives! When we do this, we look for a brighter day when the floodwaters recede, and we can exit the ark of quarantine to live again!

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