

## Gospel reflections

### [John 14:8-14](#)

Tuesday night on *The Project* Waleed Aly hosted a segment on [Virtual living](#) and provided some interesting reflections on our current experience of living virtually through the restrictions of COVID 19. What was significant for me was the sentiment in his closing comments,

*... technology has been changing us, how we interact with each other as we work, learn and play, but getting a glimpse of what that looks like in the extreme has made us realise what's missing from that equation...real face to face, human to human connection...*

The current COVID19 circumstances have provided unique opportunities for us to explore what we value and need in relationships. Perhaps, most importantly we are developing new understandings of our need for real connection, real presence in our relationships. This started me thinking about the gospel reading for the week and Jesus' message for his disciples on the night of the last supper as he prepared them for what was to come.

Let me set the scene. The disciples have spent three years with Jesus, really connecting with him, listening and learning in his presence. On this night he washes their feet, shares a new commandment, predicts his betrayal and that he will leave them and, as you can imagine, the disciples are deeply troubled. Thomas is concerned about where Jesus is going, and Jesus responds by talking about his intimate relationship with the Father. Philip steps forward seeking some sign to confirm this relationship with the Father and the identity of Jesus. After all this time in the presence of Jesus, face to face with the Father's son, Philip still has questions and is seeking a sign. You can almost see Jesus lovingly look at Philip as he listens and responds...*Have I been with you so long... and you still do not know me.*

I don't know about you, but I have often felt like Philip and pondered the years that I have known Jesus and yet still felt like I don't know anything at all. There have been challenging times when I have even asked God for a sign or some kind of confirmation that God was really with me. In our current uncertain times where such loss and tragedy is gripping the world, surely it is possible for God to provide some sign or even a check in during a Zoom meeting to provide some clarity! This passage perhaps helps us understand that it is our human spiritual journey to struggle to want to know and yet to never fully know God, to constantly seek to understand and yet to live with uncertainty until that time when we will meet God face to face.

This passage also provides us with an example of the ministry of presence as we see Jesus be fully present with his troubled followers, not brushing off their questions or getting angry at their anxiety, but listening to them and making time to respond and be with them. In times when so many are feeling troubled and alone, we too can provide such ministry and make time to be with each other, even if it is virtually, and to connect to those in our communities who are feeling most worried or alone.

It is really helpful to read this passage in the context of the entire Chapter 14 in John's gospel as it provides insights into the relational nature of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It reveals that while Jesus may no longer be fully present with us, we are not alone and have been gifted with the Holy Spirit who dwells within us and each other. Invited into this unique relationship with God, we can be God's presence in the world and fully present with each other, providing that face to face and real connection that God would want for all people.

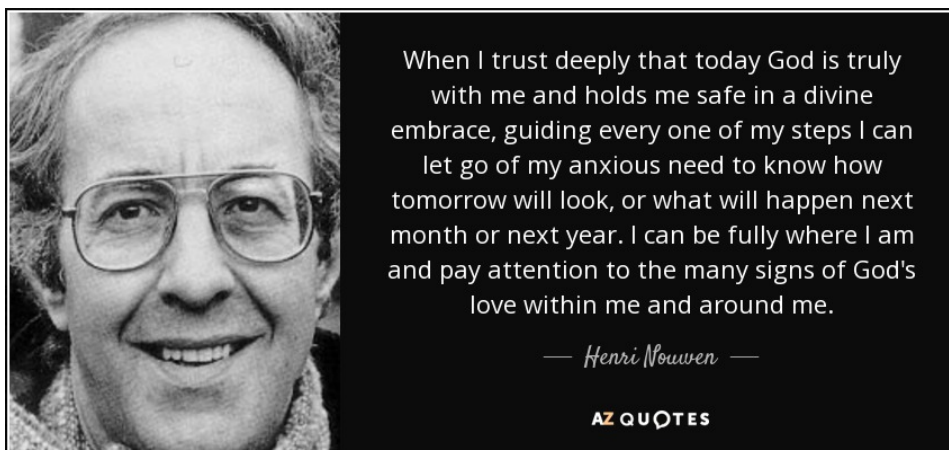
God for us, we call you Father  
God alongside us, we call you Jesus  
God within us, we call you Holy Spirit  
You are the eternal mystery that enables, enfold and enlivens all things.  
Even us and even me.

Every name falls short of your goodness and greatness.  
We can only see who you are in what is.  
We ask for such perfect seeing –  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.  
Amen  
(Rohr, R *The Divine dance*, 2016 p 161)

Video: Richard Rohr: God for, along side and within

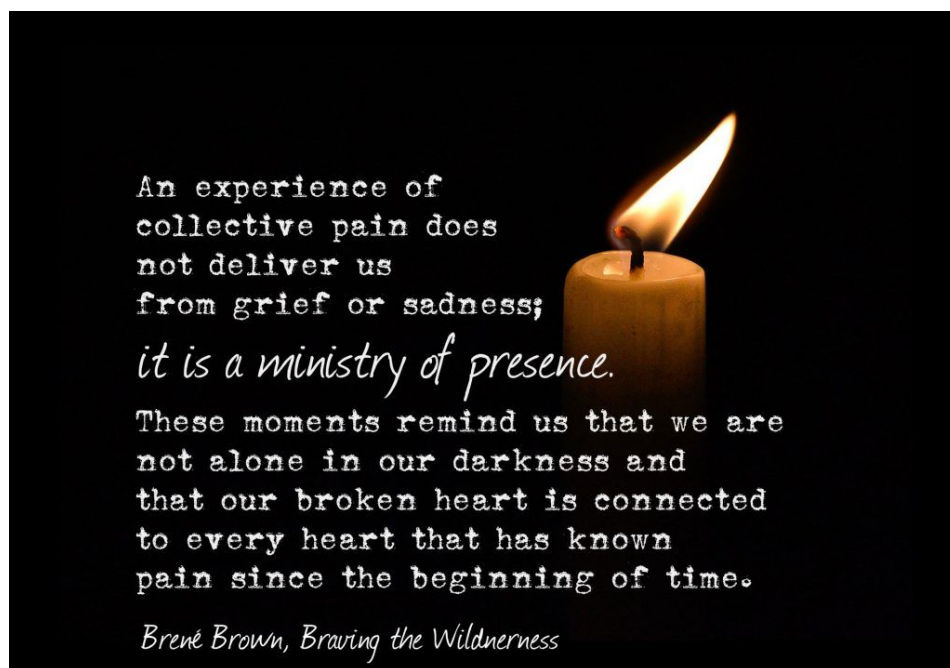
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkKLN1WgKIM&list=PLyb97tZe9a1R69mMKLxqMQQcgWqDRqRLO&inde>

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Songs: Kari Jobe I am not alone <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfveawSAHJA> live performance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow4OfW4DP9s> lyrics video



Blessings for your ministry,

Anne