

## **Improbably Human – Impossibly Loved**

*“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are your works;”* Psalm 139:14

Each of us is a unique human being with various traits, abilities, limits, quirks, thoughts, beliefs, and convictions. Each one of us is a walking, talking miracle. In all the vastness of space, time and matter, we are improbable beings.

Why do I say that? Because our very existence depends on multitude of factors that make life and consciousness possible on this singular oasis, called “Earth.”

This “pale blue dot” orbits a star which supplies just the right amount of energy to allow biological life to thrive. We humans are privileged to be the only beings, as far as we know, with the knowledge and intelligence to understand how the universe, our planet, and our own bodies function and are put together. Not just on this planet, but in the galaxy!

Earth orbits within the Sun’s “Goldilocks’ Zone” – not too hot, not too cold, just right for Life. Mercury and Venus are too close, and have no liquid water on their surface. Mars is too far away, so any water it had in the distant past, has evaporated into space, and what’s left is frozen at its poles.

The Moon has too little mass to hold onto an atmosphere. It is airless, sterile, pocked with craters, covered in dust, irradiated by the solar wind. We cannot live there without bringing everything we need: food, water, shelter – the things of Life that are abundant only on Earth.

The physics and chemistry of our home planet are fine tuned to foster biological life. The elements in our bodies, from Iodine – the heaviest, to Hydrogen – the lightest, help us thrive. The pressure and composition of the atmosphere – Nitrogen 78%, Oxygen 21%, Carbon Dioxide 0.04% and water (H<sub>2</sub>O) vapor 0.1 to 1% (depending on weather and elevation) are perfect for life. The tilt, tides and tectonics of Earth make a dynamic mixer driving change and creativity.

Our bodies are composed of billions of individual cells, assisted by trillions of beneficial bacteria, and host to millions of benign microscopic creatures.

Each person’s human cells developed from a single fertilized egg, and all share the same genetic code of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) that when activated by the organelles in each cell, create all the parts of our bodies – skin, limbs, muscles, nerves, liver, the brain, etc..

Each brain is a complex network of 86 billion neurons sending bio-chemical electrical signals back and forth. Different regions function together to process inputs from our eyes, ears, tongue, skin, muscles, etc., while others signal heart and lungs to work, store memories, perceive patterns and meaning, and make decisions and choices.

In the universe, the odds are astronomical that all these factors should come together in one place and point in time to make intelligent, inventive, self-aware, spiritual beings such as ourselves.

The voyage of the astronauts aboard Artemis II who just ventured beyond the Moon going farther from Earth than any humans have ever gone, punches this point home. In the vast, empty, inhospitable reaches of Space, our existence as living, thinking, believing beings is as improbable as it is incredible.

Yet we rarely stop to reflect on or give thanks for our existence by the power and grace of our Creator who bestows this gift of life, and all that sustains and surrounds us. Amazing are the works of God that make us through *fearful and wonderful* means. God is awesome and so is our human existence; embodied individuals with families, communities, countries, cultures, technologies and values.

We affirm and believe that God loves and cares for us and the world so much, that God took on our flesh and blood human existence in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. That the Creator could be so

moved to identify with creation as to take on the vulnerability and suffering of humanity is improbable itself. Yet God has done so in the Son, and works through that first hand experience to redeem and guide each of us here and now on Earth.

In light of our amazing existence, we have an obligation to live in peace with one another and in harmony with the rest of God's good creation. Wars of aggression, control and gain, squander the abundance, beauty and dignity of life. Pollution spoils and degrades the gifts that sustain life. Greed and waste generate inequity, injustice and conflict. Our human sin leads to suffering, violence, and desecration of what God has given as a divine blessing to each of us and to all creatures.

Each of us needs to repent of our human capacity to sin and our bent toward evil. God has called us to love one another, and to be good stewards of God's creation. From his unique perspective, Jesus the Christ forgives our sin, teaches and shows us how to live, and calls us to obey God's loving rule. The Holy Spirit empowers us to lead faithful, fruitful lives.

Can this happen in each of our lives? Our very existence is improbable – yet by God's amazing grace, we live, believe and breathe. Such a holy life seems impossible – yet with God's help and mercy, it becomes real and vital.

May God make it so for your life and on this globe that harbors the gift of Life. *Pastor Marty*