

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 7/5/2024
Breathing the Name of GOD

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

The Hebrew word for “breath,” “breathe,” and “wind” is *ruach*. It is also the word for “spirit.” (The corresponding Greek word is *pneuma*, as in pneumatic or pneumonia.) This gives significant meaning to several narratives in the Bible. In particular, in the story of the creation of Adam, after GOD formed the human out of mud or clay or dust of the ground, GOD “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” GOD’s *Ruach* is the source of life. *RUACH* can also refer to the HOLY SPIRIT.

In Moses' encounter with GOD who spoke to him through the burning bush, he asked GOD for GOD’s name. GOD graciously answered in the original Hebrew *YHWH*. The original Hebrew did not include vowels, just the four consonants for GOD’s name. Later, the letters “a” and “e” were arbitrarily added to get *YAHWEH*. Scholars and rabbis have noted that the letters *YHWH* represents breathing sounds or aspirated consonants. When pronounced without intervening vowels, it actually sounds like breathing: *YH* (inhale), *WH* (exhale).

So, a baby’s first cry, hers or his first breath, speaks the name of GOD.

A deep sigh calls GOD’s name, or a groan or gasp too weighty for words.

When a person’s life ends with their last breath, GOD’s name is the last thing spoken and spirit no longer fills their lungs.

Even an atheist speaks the name of GOD with every breath, giving constant recognition to GOD despite their unbelief.

Being alive means speaking GOD’s name constantly. In the quietest moment, we hear GOD’s name the loudest. In sadness, we breathe the name of GOD. In joy, our lungs are filled with GOD’s name. When we are fearful, we hold onto GOD as we hold our breath and must be reminded to breathe slowly to help us calm down. When we’re about to face a challenge, we take a deep breath to find our courage. Breathing is giving GOD praise. In the most jubilant moments and the hardest ones.

GOD chose to take a name that we can’t help but speak in every moment we are alive. GOD is an integral part of what it is to be alive. Whether it is waking or sleeping, we breathe with the name of GOD on our lips.

In CHRIST's love,
Pastor Jeffrey