

Soul Sisters 1 – Eve



Image: Marc Chagall – Eve
Incurs God's Displeasure

Genesis 2:18-23 NRSV

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.' So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said,

*'This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.'*

Traditionally, the book of Genesis tells us that Eve is the first woman, created by God from Adam's rib. MT Winter suggests that it may be more accurate to say that she is the first female to have an identity in the Judeo-Christian faith story. She is also the first woman to encounter the human experiences of hard work and labour pain, the joyful moments of partnership and parenting, and then the heartbreak of losing her sons, one to murder and the other to exile. Being created second, and from Adam's rib, suggests she is destined to be considered subservient.

Adam may personify the first Man, both within and beyond the Garden of Eden, but Eve personifies the curiosity and creativity needed to think beyond the boundaries – which is possibly the more significant human trait. In the Christian tradition, Eve bears a negative association for being the one who urged Adam to eat the fruit and thus set in motion humanity's fall from grace. But Jewish interpreters hold this story up as an example of human freedom and the push and pull relationship between God and humanity.

What can we learn from our Soul Sister Eve? Be careful who you listen to – whether it be serpent or creator, be discerning of which one is really committed to wellbeing and abundant life. God's decision to save Eve and Adam from death, and only to send them into the world, suggests that our relationship with God is much more complex than right/wrong; obey/disobey.

Question for Reflection: Do you think eating the fruit was a sin, which led to the problem of evil, or a blessing, which led to the fullness of human potential?

Prayer:

O God, all creation sings your praise. For you have created an abundant universe, rich in diversity and nourishing every living thing. Yet we struggle to understand what it means when life is hard, or we lose control, or have to adapt to an unexpected outcome. Give us the courage of Eve, we pray, to reach out for you with growing curiosity, and the trust that even our mistakes will be forgiven. Amen