**Discovering our Stories**

**Deuteronomy 26:1-10**

If you will only obey the Lord your God, by diligently observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today, the Lordyour God will set you high above all the nations of the earth; 2all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the Lordyour God: 3Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. 4Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, both the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock. 5Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 6Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 7The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways. 8The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns, and in all that you undertake; he will bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. 9The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. 10All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you.

**Themes**:

 -Ancestors

 -Struggle

 -Liberation

 -Place

 -Gratitude/Praise

 -Justice

**Questions for Digging Deeper**

Ancestors

-What is their story; how does it relate to yours?

-what brought your ancestors to this country?

-how far back do you know your ancestors?

-what do I want to carry forward and what do I want to release from my ancestors?

-how does my ancestry affect how I am/live today?

-what was the relationship my ancestors had to the place they came from, the place they moved to?

Place

Whose land do you live on?

How did you come to be there?

How were its caretakers removed?

Where did they go?

What values does this place hold?

What values does it instill in you?

What does the land say to you?

Why do you stay?

Is it a prison or a paradise?

How do you care for this place?

How does this place care for you?

Struggle

How is the pain of your life connected to the mission of your life?

What were the public and personal struggles that most shaped your ancestors?

What are the ones that mos shape you?

How has your personal pain or struggle brought you closer to God/Jesus/faith/community?

When faced with adversity, what internal/external/spiritual resources do you call on?

How do our struggles bring us together?

How do our struggles truly connect us with people we love?

How can we use our struggles to benefit others?

Gratitude

What do you grieve; how does this tell you what you love?

What am I grateful for?

How do I show I am grateful?

Can I share my gratitude communally/publicly?

Am I intentional about showing it?

Was there a time in my life when I did not feel grateful? What brought me back to gratitude?

Is there a way I can help others feel gratitude?

Liberation

What do I need freedom from?

How did things get to be this bad?

What does liberation look like?

What lessons am I learning from oppression?

In what way(s) am I an oppressor?

How does/might my liberation oppress others?

Is my liberation finite?

How do I enslave myself?

Is there something better than liberation?

When is death liberating?

Justice

How is my story connected to my work for justice?

What has justice looked like/felt for me

-as a youth?

-in middle age?

-as an elder?

What about the struggle for justice keeps me awake at night?

Is there someone who has been a figurehead of justice for me?

When have I celebrated justice?

How have you been in a justice work or victory that renewed you?

What communities have modeled justice for me?

What communities enriched my desire/zeal for justice?

Are there times I have experienced injustice? Describe them? How do those experiences inform your work for justice now?

*- Compiled by EcoFaith Leader Dave Pritchett of the Wilderness Way Community*