

Thursday Thought: 10/10/24

The house that is in front of our neighborhood school bus stop has really embraced its happenstance public service to the parents and children of the community. Their yard is naturally elevated above the sidewalk, so they have a retaining wall that invites parents and kids to sit while they wait under the branches of a large, shady tree. Next to the wall is a colorfully decorated "Little Free Library" and spaced around the tree's branches are two wooden swings and one hammock swing. The little area seems to say, "sometimes in life you have to wait for something; might as well enjoy the wait."

At the beginning of the school year, many kids do enjoy the swings and peruse the library...but as the weeks march on and schedules get fuller, it seems as if the margins around the bus stop get tighter and tighter, no longer leisurely strolls with plenty of lead time, but more cars rolling in just as the bus is pulling up, frantic parents trying to get everyone, including themselves, where they need to be on time, and pushing those schedules to the second to do so. Not much time for a hammock swing.

I was having one such afternoon this week. School pick up often feels like it comes right in the middle of my workflow, especially when there are evening meetings in just a few hours. Waiting for the bus, I used the time to check email on my phone. When the kids were both in hand, I turned to get their bike helmets ready and said, "Let's go, Daddy has more work to do," and turned around to see both boys loving their moment of being reunited and swinging away. Perhaps the work can wait for five minutes, or at least until I get a good picture for Mom and the Thursday Thought.

On the walk home, I took a moment to register how lovely the day really was; sunny, upper 60s a light breeze, golden leaves starting to peak more and more through the emerald canopy of our street. I don't think that my eyes would be open to seeing the beauty around me, if the kiddos hadn't spontaneously launched us into a moment of holy play. I would have probably just kept thinking of my emails and upcoming meetings. Both trains of thought have a place in life...but only one really helped me to *be alive* and connect with the holiness of the moment (and it wasn't the "church stuff").

Part of my foundational belief is that the world is covered in the fingerprints of God's creative love. I see them in the beauty of the creation itself, in the Holy Spirit that moves and breathes through the trees and through our lungs, and in one another who inherit the incarnational ministry from Jesus, and invite us to tarry in the holiness of an otherwise seemingly insignificant moment. So my invitation and prayer for you is that your eyes will be opened like mine were this week, to see those bus stop moments as opportunities to see the beauty around us and to lean into the presence of God in our midst, even in the busyness of life.