



Calvary Presbyterian Church
Sunday, January 21, 2024

Where Does it Hurt?
Rev. Eyde Mabanglo

SCRIPTURE—Mark 5:24-34 (NRSVUE)

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians and had spent all that she had, and she was no better but rather grew worse ²⁷She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, "If I but touch his cloak, I will be made well." ²⁹Immediately her flow of blood stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my cloak?" ³¹And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?' ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

INTRO

Sheba Commercial—A mom is sitting on the couch reading and cuddling with her cat.

"Mom"!

Yeah.

"I fell!"

Okay. There's bandages in the cabinet.

"I'm bleeding"

Grab two.

Reminds me of my dad...stop your crying or...I'll give you... (ask audience to complete the statement) something to cry about.

Where did our parents learn this???

I'm worried that there's a faction of our white American church that is in danger of becoming callous to the pain of others?

Jesus in our holy scriptures teaches us again and again how to not be so quick to dismiss people, their heartache and pain.

The question for today is not: What's your problem?

It is: Where does it hurt?

One question assumes a position of power and judgement, it is distant as it is dismissive.

The other is compassionate, kind, and—in the asking alone—is an unmistakable blessing within itself.

In today's story, Jesus wants to hear the story of heartache and pain from the woman who reached out to him.

He knows who she is—but he stops and calls her out from the shadows, invites her to tell her story because it has value. She has value too.

When we listen, we value the other. And those who have had a lifetime of feeling disposable need to be heard, valued, listened to, and thereby loved.

...just as Jesus loved.

When he sees her—he is essentially asking one of the most important questions of human connection—Where does it hurt?

And then he calls her daughter!
The only time he does this in all of scripture.

Daughter.
As if to say you are mine—beloved, seen, valued, claimed as my own.

Friends, there are so many of us and so many surrounding us who feel disposable, dismissed, judged, shamed, and unseen. When we ask them to tell us their story...we are Christ to them...and perhaps they can be Christ to us. In either case, Christ is present, and we honor God's presence in a sacred, humble, human moment.

Forty years ago, my mom was told she had two months to two years to live. Well, she died after two months on April Fool's Day.

Heartache and pain.

The next fall, my dad was asked by my sister's university to prepare a surprise care package for her as a homecoming gesture for new students. In true Edward fashion, he sent her brand-new crew socks.

She was so frustrated. Angry. She felt unseen. It was so hard for her to go off to college while grieving the loss of her mother. She shared her resentment to anyone who would listen about how insensitive her dad was to her heartache and pain. That was her story.

Then someone who took the time to listen to her story—asked her to consider my dad's story. In other words—thank you for telling me where it hurts, but isn't your dad hurting too? He just lost his wife.

When my sister paused to consider my dad's story, her heart was broken again. They were both hurting...she just wasn't seeing how he was suffering in the shadows.

Not only that...my dad was, no doubt, wrestling with a lifetime of grief. When I stopped to also consider his story, I realized that when he was the same age as us, and in college, that his own mother died of the exact same cancer. He started drinking then, and he drank his whole life to deal with that heartache and pain in the shadows. He now doubled down on his grief as he watched his children live that same story that he knew too well.

It was steeped in that heartache and pain that he died three years later, due to cancer, complications from alcohol abuse, and a broken heart.

When we ask, "where does it hurt"? We are setting aside our own agendas, egos, and insecurities and extending the grace and compassion of a love that is divine and eternal. A love that spoke the world into existence. A love that speaks our name and claims us as family.

A love that will not let us go. We are not setting aside our story in order to listen to others; instead, we are expanding the notion that we may very well be part of the same story.

Where does it hurt?

Not just a question for a person, but a question for people groups...not just a neighbor on the sidewalk, but a loving question for a family, a tribe, a community, a nation.

There are global implications for asking the question about the source of our anger, our pain, our resentments, our challenges, our story. To care, to listen, to see, to understand, to love is the purpose of today's story, the purpose of Jesus' ministry on earth, the purpose of the gospel, the purpose of the church, this church, and the purpose of every human heart.

I stumbled across a song that was written the year my mom passed away, and I learned about the story behind the writing of this song: "I Want to Know What Love Is" 1984.

Foreigner guitarist Mick Jones wrote a transatlantic hit that he believed came from "a higher force". He invited a black, gospel choir into the studio to help him record the song. It is a prayer to the God of love to teach him about love divine.

I Want to Know What Love Is (Foreigner)

*I've gotta take a little time
A little time to think things over
I better read between the lines
In case I need it when I'm older*

*Now this mountain I must climb
Feels like the world upon my shoulders
Through the clouds, I see love shine
It keeps me warm as life grows colder
In my life, there's been heartache and pain
I don't know if I can face it again
Can't stop now, I've traveled so far to change this lonely life*

*I wanna know what love is, I want you to show me
I wanna feel what love is, I know you can show me*

*I'm gonna take a little time
A little time to look around me
I've got nowhere left to hide
It looks like love has finally found me
In my life, there's been heartache and pain
I don't know if I can face it again
I can't stop now, I've traveled so far to change this lonely life*

An intimate love. A global love. A forever and a day love.

What if this is the basis behind all truth...
that we ask the world--where does it hurt? And then listen.

"what they did yesterday afternoon"
by warsan shire (Somali-British Poet)

*they set my aunt's house on fire
i cried the way women on tv do
folding at the middle
like a five-pound note.
i called the boy who use to love me
tried to 'okay' my voice
i said hello
he said warsan, what's wrong, what's happened?
i've been praying,
and these are what my prayers look like;
dear god
i come from two countries
one is thirsty
the other is on fire
both need water.
later that night
i held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
and whispered
where does it hurt?
it answered
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere.*

We are being called out of the shadows to call others out of the shadows.
We are encouraged to reach out and touch Jesus.
We are to hear him call us child, his own, his beloved.

But we are to be his agents of love and grace and compassion in this world—especially to those whose story is complex and foreign and different from ours.

We are to love our neighbor by calling others from the shadows.
We are to love our neighbor not by asking what's your problem...
but by asking where does it hurt?
We are to love our neighbor by listening to their story.

We are to love our neighbor by claiming them as family, seen, and beloved.

We are to love as we are loved.

My dad's birthday is on the same day as a king's birthday! I was a very small little girl. I just saw king on the calendar and thought that was cool. I didn't know anything about MLK.

My dad's birthday is the same as Martin Luther King's. I was reminded of this again last week.

MLK was born on Jan 15, 1929

DAD was born two years later - on Jan 15, 1931

"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." Martin Luther King Jr.

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." MLK

"Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" (MLK)

What are we going to do...Where do we begin?

And we may know best how to answer these questions for ourselves if we begin with asking—tell me, where does it hurt?

May it be so.

