

Easter Sunday: April 4, 2021

Sermon Message Series: “Holy Disruption”

Scriptural Lesson: Acts 10: 34-43

Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

We are wrapping up our “Holy Disruption,” series; a sermon series that was designed specifically for Holy Week; A week that began on Palm Sunday and concluded on Holy Saturday;

- And so the rationale for my naming this series a holy disruption;
- Is because the longer I live and the longer I do ministry, it seems to me that as a Church globally; **we have not fully captured** the Good News; which I hold myself as the primary preacher of this beautiful community; to keep seeking, naming and proclaiming; all the while holding the pulpit and myself accountable to achieve this homiletic task.
- **Good News that is supposed** to release the captives free;

- **Good News that is supposed to** help recover the sight of the blind;
- You see in my eyes, the story of Jesus has become fractured or disjointed on some level; catered and designed to reflect the values and traditions of the particular church community;
- For depending on what Church community you have been raised in; and depending on what Christology the church community possesses (high Christology focuses on the Jesus as Lord and Savior; low Christology focuses on Jesus as servant); typically dictates how the story of Holy Week leading up to Easter will be told.
- **Some Church Communities** will choose to focus on the symbolism of it all;
- **In Church communities such as this**, there will be a huge focus on the symbolism of palm branches, crosses draped with fabric that matches

the liturgical season and colors; foot washing basins and prayer stations and more.

- Most if not all Church Communities, will choose hymns and songs that focuses on varied aspects of the story of Christ; some hymns naming Jesus' charity, service and ministry while on Earth; while others will focus on Jesus' sacrifice for humanity and themes of salvation and the afterlife.
- There is some emphasis and consideration for what Holy Week and Easter could mean for us in the here and the now in some churches I have attended or participated in; messages that encourage the communities to love one another as God has loved them; or on the flip side; messages that encourage the congregation to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior;
- All that I am naming and more are not bad in my eyes;

- For I have seen beautiful services from just about every type of worship community.
- However, as I go back to my first sentiment; **I worry about this** a-la carte approach to theology as it pertains to Jesus and Jesus' messages;
- **I worry if somehow** the Church has a whole has missed an important opportunity here; **an opportunity that would help** to connect the dots from Jesus story to our story;
- **I worry if the ceremony of it all**; regardless of how beautiful it may be; **I worry** if it will be able to connect to those who have been deemed lepers in our society and treated as outcast as a result.
- **I worry if the tradition** of it all, fully addresses the global matters and social matters and injustices that are surrounding our communities and world.
- **I worry if some of our** liturgical practices as a whole, fully speaks to the families that are suffering from food insecurity.

- **I worry if the traditions we subscribe to** that are comfortable for us seasoned church folk; **fully speaks** to the person trying to figure out if they can afford their prescriptions and eat at the same time.
- **I worry Church**, if what we do in the Church, in the name of the Church and for the sake of the Church; **I worry if we as seasoned Church participants**, are helping to connect the dots to those who really needs to hear the Good News;
- **For those who could use** some Good News; as it pertains to who Jesus is and the Good News that Jesus sacrificed his life to share to humanity.
- **I worry church**, if we have made the space we need in our worship settings, liturgies, sermons and more; to really reach the masses of people;
- **People who may not really care** about the religion and ceremony of it all; **as much as they** are concerned with the relationship of it all;

- **People that I suspect that are mainly concerned** with this idea **if someone could care** enough about their lives; **if someone could care** enough about their realities; **if someone could care** enough about their circumstances; their welfare and so forth;
- **People that I suspect** are really concerned with whether they are seen or not;
- **People that are concerned** with whether they are forgiven or not;
- **People that are concerned** whether they have a chance to truly reset or not;
- **People who are concerned** with whether they and their situation can truly be restored or not;
- This my friends is why I was lead by the Spirit of the Lord I believe to name this series as a Holy Disruption;
- **A Disruption that** would invite us to step away from the daily routines of church;

- Routines that help us all to pull off yet another Holy Week;
- **A week filled with** ceremony;
- **A week filled with** tradition;
- **A week filled with** just enough familiarity through hymns, liturgy and more; designed to create a comfortable sense of nostalgia for most of us;
- **A week that I imagine** brings beautiful memories for some, as we gather around the table with our families for Easter supper;
- **A week that I don't want to eliminate** any of these good things from any of us who looks forward to this time of our liturgical year; for it really is a beautiful time isn't it;
- The lilies, the beautiful dresses; the traditions that we hold dear to our hearts...there is so much meaning to it.
- If I am honest, I just worry about if it holds meaning just for us...at times.

- So God planted this idea of a disruption within me; to begin to sift through some of these worries/ concerns that I have named as your spiritual leader so that we might all get to the heart of this mission;
- **So that we might really take** an honest look at our ministries on every level and make sure that it doesn't just cater to US.
- **So that we might** get to the essence behind Jesus persistence;
- That this was not a week that Christ endured **to only be recalled once a year;**
- But what Jesus as God did; was began a week that was designed to jump start within all of us, **a lifelong mission;** that would could continue to seek out justice for the oppressed;
- **A lifelong mission,** that would continue to disrupt a world, that has gotten really comfortable in their disregard for human life and sacred worth;

- **A lifelong mission**, that would disrupt things until oppressive systems are reformed;
- **Until** hardened hearts are softened;
- **Until** walls of discrimination and marginalization come tumbling down and are replaced with bridges that would lead to love, reconciliation, repair and community resurrection;
- This church is what Holy Week has become for me;
- **Not just another time** of our liturgical calendar that is to be observed once a year;
- On the contrary, Jesus began a disruption that we are to continue every day;
- In our homes,
- In our work places,
- In our communities;
- Wherever we go;
- **A disruption that would lead to a Mighty Resurrection** of God's people, coming together in

the work of repair and reconciliation; until thy kingdom come on Earth as in heaven.

- **So bringing in our lesson more directly Church, because I believe we have already been indirectly addressing the sentiment of Peter in our lesson today;**
- What I love about Peter is that I believe that he made this mindset switch that I am inviting us all to consider when it comes to how we share this story to the world;
- Peter is what I would call one of the seasoned church people I have been talking about;
- He was seasoned enough to know for instance, when he was on top of the Mountain with James and John and Jesus; Elijah and Moses appeared and Jesus transfigured right before their very eyes into this dazzling white(this story is found in the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Luke and Mark); Peter just like a beloved church member deemed

some sort of ceremony should happen; missing that there was a deeper revelation occurring right before his very eyes.

- And even though Peter would predictably deny Jesus three times, Peter was also a seasoned enough church person; who also named Jesus as the Son of God.
- So I stopped by to say there is nothing wrong with being a seasoned church person.
- I am seasoned; most of you in this space and online is what I would call seasoned church people.
- We know how to do church....
- We know how to put together the best church dinners and we know how to get the job done and get it done well.
- So please don't mistake what I am saying here... we need seasoned faithful church folk;

- Without people that are committed to the church in this manner, we would not have a church.
- But what I love about Peter though, is that he teaches us how to be seasoned in the church life; at the same time making sure that his ministry was not one to cater to just US seasoned folks.
- For in our passage today, I am excited to name that Peter is doing the mindset switch that I am implicitly naming in this message today;
- Because as I attempt to make this personal and relevant for us today;
- Peter began his message to the Gentile household of Cornelius, probably including many Italian soldiers from the barracks, **by frankly acknowledging his shattered Jewish prejudices** and his new understanding of the impartiality of God in His great plan of human redemption.

- So for us today, the universality of divine redemption is often taken for granted, because for both Jew and Gentile in Peter's day the whole matter was an entirely new concept.
- Indeed, it was implicit in the teachings of the prophets and in Christ's works and words, but it required a special divine revelation for it to become explicit in the ministry of the Christian apostles. ¹
- So in laypersons term, the concept of resurrection back then was really difficult to grasp;
- **For yes there** was the transfiguration mountain;
- **Yes Jesus** prophesied his own death and resurrection to the disciples;

¹

Carter, C. W. (1966). [The Acts of the Apostles](#). In *Matthew-Acts* (Vol. 4, p. 549). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- **Yes the** disciples even witnessed this theme of resurrection through Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead;
- But yet this concept was not something that they had the benefit of hearing year after year after year like a lot of us have;
- This is why what Peter is identifying is remarkable in this passage;
- Essentially, in a single sentence, Peter's utterance is effective, as one scholar named it, in "sweeping away the racial prejudices of centuries."
- The metaphorical lightbulb came on within Peter;
- **Allowing him to connect the dots for the people then and us now;** that a real movement just occurred before them all through the persistent ministry of Jesus Christ;
- Jesus who was determined to make a statement to the world (as I attempt to flesh out a compilation

of Jesus declarations in my own words throughout His life on Earth);

- That I (Jesus) came so that you might have life and have it abundantly;
- The thief of evil and oppression has come to take this away from you, but Jesus said;
- “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

- Jesus is saying to us in 2021, I have come to basically say to the poor, **I am on your side;**
- To say to the hungry, **I am on your side;**
- To say to those pursuing justice, mercy and inclusion; **I am on your side;**

- To say to the broken and the downtrodden...**I am on your side;**
- To the woman at the well who had to fetch her water in the heat of the day because all of the town folks were shaming her....**I am on your side...**
- To the wrongfully imprisoned, racially profiled...**I am on your side...**
- For I stopped by to decree and declare that **God is on the side of Love;**
- **God is on the side** of justice,
- **God is on the side** of every person who has been made to feel like an outcast;
- So this is the ministry we must strive to emanate within all of the folks who have experienced church hurt and exclusion;
- Ceremonies that become reflections of God's unconditional love for all;

- Traditions that name that we serve a Lord who risked his own life for this message; that I am on your side.....
- I am within you and you are within me....
- **Whatever trial** you are experiencing...
- **Whatever wound** has not been healed...
- **Whatever hardship** you are experiencing...
- I get it....
- I get you....
- You and I are one in the same....
- **Whatever has not been done** for the least of these has not been done for me....
- **On the flip side** whatever is done for the least of this, have been done for me....
- Letting us all know in a world that may have excluded us indefinitely, because of who we are and our biological makeup...
- That God is on our side....
- And once we get this...

- Once the church life reflects this...in our music, in our messages, in our small groups, in our day to day workings within the church; a ministry that is not just for “US”; but for the entire body that currently is not all accounted for;
- This is how we begin to embody what it means to know who and whose we are;
- And once we embody this very sentiment....
- I believe that this is when we have captured the true resurrection of community...
- Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology said something powerful that I will leave with us to chew on.
- He said, “the world will ask you who you are, and if you do not know, the world will tell you.”
- The Resurrection of Jesus Christ **tells us who we are.**

- Once we become to fully know/trust who and whose we are in the name of Jesus....then we become the resurrected!
- In the name of the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer....Let the Church Say Amen and Hallelujah!

Easter Sunday: April 4, 2021
Sermon Message Series: “Holy Disruption”
First Lesson: Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24
Gospel Lesson: John 20: 1-18
Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

We are wrapping up our Holy Disruption sermon series, which the Spirit of the Lord led me to call this particularly for Holy Week and Easter,

- Because this is one of the most important weeks in the life of the Church,
- I mentioned on our Good Friday service that Holy Week is just as important to say the French fries in McDonalds;
- Where just as most of us would be outraged if we discovered that McDonalds ran out of French fries;

- I would suspect an uproar, if the Church decided that we were not going to have Holy Week or Easter this year!
- Last year, the pandemic did not stop us from celebrating Holy Week or Easter even though we were not in the sanctuary;
- But in my naming this truth folks, this highlights how important this time of our liturgical season is for the church;
- **For this is the time** where folks considering giving church a try again will make an appearance;
- The church data reveals that **this is the time** that people will decide to leave their homes after most of us have spent over a year in isolation; due to this pandemic that still keeps persisting.
- **This is the time**, where although the relevancy of Church is still a question for some if not most;
- As we learned how much over this past year can really be done at home...

- Holy Week and Easter; (a week that begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Holy Saturday); are still relevant to people.
- **This time** of our liturgical year is still proven to be very important to people.
- **So it is with this knowledge that I believe that the Spirit of the Lord would have me call this time together a Holy Disruption.**
- Because as I shared in part one of this message this morning as we looked at the text of Peter who has essentially a mindset shift in regards to what Jesus crucifixion and resurrection means to the world;
- **I expressed a worry**, that I am not sure if the church has done the necessary mindset shift necessary; to tell the full story that needs to be told fully;

- You see I thought about it and perhaps I can share this in a more condensed way than I did in the earlier message;
- But I think that the Church does a great job of building up a lot of momentum for this time of our liturgical season; Holy Week and Easter.
- **We typically have** more worship rehearsals;
- **We have** several dress rehearsals;
- This is now my third sermon of the week;
- As a side note, I am so grateful for our lay leader who brought a beautiful message to us for Holy Thursday;
- I love the energy and tone that Terri set for the church; to allow us to really prepare for the mindset shift I am inviting us all to consider;
- Because the reality for me is that just as much as I experience my own thrill of Holy Week and Easter in all of its preparation and anticipation for it;

- **I worry if we as a church** are capturing the full story and Jesus intent behind his own journey;
- For I stopped by to suggest that the Holy Week that Jesus endured was not a fun week for him; I stated this awareness on Good Friday;
- **Nor was any of what** he did meant to be treated and observed as an isolated event.
- On the contrary, Jesus pain filled journey, was a week that I am convinced was to help jumpstart a life-long missional movement;
- **A movement towards** seeking justice for all;
- **A movement towards** seeking to share God's love and inclusion for all;
- **A movement** that is to be continued every day;
- In our homes,
- In our jobs,
- In our communities;

- **A movement that** emphasizes the same passion of Jesus this idea that God is deeply disturbed with how God's creation has been corrupted;
- **A deeply disturbed God** who always honors our free will to think, act, speak and do things on our own;
- But just as I as a mother am learning what it means to let soon to be young adults; my daughters; have their independence and make their own decisions;
- I stopped by to proclaim that I don't care if they are 20, 30, 40 or older;
- If I am blessed to be alive as they grow older;
- **I will always try** to push them out of harms way, if I see that a metaphorical train is coming.
- **I will always offer** up some sometimes unsolicited guidance and feedback if I feel they are going in the wrong direction;
- **I am perfectly ok** with them being upset eternally with me for making sure that they are ok;

- **I am perfectly ok** with the eye rolling, and tempered annoyance; because I love my children and there is nothing they can do about it!
- **And so you see, this is how I see Jesus acting on behalf of humanity during this Holy Week;**
- For somewhere, somehow, the Good News was kept from groups of people who needed to hear some good news;
- **Those who have been** deemed as outcasts and lepers from the world; **those have been** brainwashed to think that they were not included in this; **those who have been** harmed by harmful ideologies claiming to be the voice of God....
- Jesus essentially said in his mission, actions and words as I attempt to make his efforts come alive for us....
- You may want to stone this woman for adultery, **but that is not where I stand!**

- You may want to dismiss this woman with the issues of blood....**but that is not where I stand.**
- You may want to dismiss the people along the margins crying for food, shelter; to basically be seen....**but that is not where I stand.**
- **For I have come** to stand with the poor...
- **I have come** to stand with the oppressed....
- **I have come** to stand with the marginalized....
- **I have come** to stand with the broken.....
- **I choose to** eat with the tax collectors....
- **I choose to** eat with the sinners.....
- **I choose to see** the downtrodden...
- **I choose to see** the victimized.....
- **I choose to be** anointed by the woman, who caused a major disruption; presumed Mary of Bethany, by breaking open her alabaster jar; anointing my head with oil in the midst of all of the objections that surrounded her.

- **Directly making our way to our passage, Jesus in my biblical imagination said to the world; I choose Mary Magdalene; not to be confused with Mary of Bethany (sister of Martha and whose brother is Lazarus); or to be confused with my mother Mary;**
- **But I choose** the one who you all have deemed to be a prostitute;
- **I choose the** one who you all have even named to be demon possessed;
- **I choose Mary Magdalene** to affirm who and whose she is;
- For she is my daughter;
- And as a step out of the character of Jesus for a moment; **what better way** to reveal Jesus Resurrection, than by showing to Mary first that the tomb is empty;
- **What better way** to reveal to the world what a resurrection is by having a woman who entered the

cave as a society defined demon possessed,
prostitute and comes out like the restored,
sanctified Disciple that she is....

- So I stopped by to suggest, that for those who might be disappointed because you were hoping to get a traditional Easter message this morning;
- For those of you who might be disturbed that I didn't talk enough about the empty tomb;
- I stopped by to declare and decree, **that I am and have been** talking about the empty tomb all along;
- I stopped by to declare **that I am and have been** talking about Jesus Resurrection all along;
- Because the empty tomb as disruptive it must have been for Mary, taught Mary Magdalene that day.... **that she was enough.**
- The empty tomb teaches you and I, **that we are enough....**
- **God could have** led anyone to that tomb first;
- **God could have** had the first be a Roman soldier;

- **God could have** had the first be a group of known prominent people all at once...
- **So for God to make** this pivotal moment be discovered by a section of society **that has not been** seen; **that has been** treated inhumanely; **that has been** determined to be a social deviant and outcast;
- **Then what better way** to introduce the concept of resurrection in the here and the now;
- **For not only does** the empty tomb in my eyes put the period on death not being the final say; **for I believe** in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ Church;
- **I believe in** God, Creator of Heaven and earth;
- **I believe in** Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, ...**I believe that** Jesus ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father/Mother/Creator Almighty;

- **I also believe that** the empty tomb being viewed by Mary Magdalene first is something that should not be dismissed;
- **I believe that this truth** makes the Resurrection apply to me in the here and the now and forevermore...
- **I believe that this same** resurrection applies to all of us in the here and the now and forevermore;
- For once we discover **that we are enough;** because God says we are enough;
- **Once we discover** who and whose we are; we are all children of the living, resurrected God;
- For the Word tells us and bear with me because I want to make this extra personal;
- **That we are all part of the genealogy[a] of Jesus the Messiah[b] the son of David,(D) the son of Abraham:(E)**
- **2 Where** Abraham was the father of Isaac,(E)

- Isaac the father of Jacob, (G)
- Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, (H)
-
- **And if you are still not hearing me.....I'll keep going....**
- **3 Where** Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, (I)
- Perez the father of Hezron,
- Hezron the father of Ram,
- **4** Ram the father of Amminadab,
- Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
- Nahshon the father of Salmon,
-
-
- **I think you may know where I am headed.....**
But allow me go a little further;

- **5 Where** Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,(J)
- Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,
- Obed the father of Jesse,
- **6** and Jesse the father of King David.(K)
- David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,(L)
-
- **I think I'm making my point.....but I have to make sure.....**
-
- **7 Where** Solomon was the father of Rehoboam,
- Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
- Abijah the father of Asa,
- **8** Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

- Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,
- Jehoram the father of Uzziah,
- 9 Uzziah the father of Jotham,
-
- **I'm going to fast forward a bit so that I don't lose this momentum of the Spirit stirring within this community.....**
- Where Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary,(Q) and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.
- **Jesus our** Lord, our Redeemer;
- Jesus, the Prince of Peace;
- Jesus the Door and the Shepherd;
- Jesus, Precious Jesus; Oh how I love the sound of your name Jesus!

- **Jesus is claiming us all to be a part of this very family lineage that I took the time to share.**
- **Jesus is** claiming you as family;
- **Jesus is** claiming myself as family;
- We are all part of God's family!
- So once we all get this... and I mean really get this;
- **Regardless of** what the world may tell us;
- **Regardless of** what our critics may tell us;
- **Regardless of** how we are portrayed in the media, to our naysayers; to our skeptics and more;
- Then we too become resurrected.... **We become** unstoppable in our gifts and contributions towards the world.
- You see as I shared in the earlier message; Carl Jung; the founder of analytical psychology said

something powerful that I will leave with us to chew on.

- He said, “the world will ask you who you are, and if you do not know, the world will tell you.”
- I stopped by to declare that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ **tells us who we are.**
-
- Once we become to fully know/trust who and whose we are in the name of Jesus....then we become the resurrected!
- A powerful Resurrection that speaks life into death; all the while declaring;
- Where oh where death is your victory; where oh death is your sting!
- But Thanks be to God! Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!
- Let the Church Say Amen and Hallelujah!