

**Sunday: March 28, 2021**

**Scriptural Lesson: Mark 14: 1-9**

**Sermon Series: Holy Disruption Part 1**

**Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel**

**We are kicking off palm Sunday with a new sermon series entitled; Holy Disruption.**

- This is a series where in both our 8:30 and 10:45 worship services, you and I will be identifying the disruptions that we might encounter in our scriptures, that might inform us on both the individual and collective level as a church community and world.
- Disruptions that perhaps may or may not have been welcomed;
- Disruptions that may or may not have even been anticipated;
- With this idea that disruptions are perhaps necessary, so that space can be made for God's activity in our lives,; in our communities and our world.

- So for this moment, I will be addressing the heart of the individual; I'm talking about you and I am talking about myself.
- And before delving into the text itself, allow me first to define and clarify what I mean by disruptions; to ensure that we are all on the same page.
- So one definition for a disruption is defined as a disturbance or problems which interrupt an event, activity, or process.
- A disruption is a break or interruption in the normal course or continuation of some activity, process, etc.
- A disruption can be a radical change to an existing industry or market due to technological innovation.
- So a disruption is not necessarily a bad thing;
- For some of our greatest leaders, CEO, innovators and more, have the quality of disruption as part of their professional repertoire if you think about it.
- As it pertains to the new business models that are part of our reality today; it has been noted that customers want things done faster, better, quicker and with

less,<sup>1</sup> according to an article that I read entitled, “The Disciplines of Disruption,” by Ken Gosnell.

- As it pertains to ministry, parishioners over time have identified similar needs as it pertains to their clergy.
- Congregants have begun to realize that their pastors and ministerial leaders need to be more than just good preachers and teachers.
- Pastors must be visionaries, innovators; have business savvy and more.
- This is why my own personal call as it pertains to being an ordained Elder in the Great Plains Conference according to the book of Discipline; involves four parts; Word, Order, Sacraments and Service.
- So what that means is that I am called at times to be a teacher, preacher, administrator, business woman, fundraiser, business/ministry developer, pastoral care connoisseur and more.
- Taking all of this in; a person can imagine that wearing this many hats in the church or business involves some measure of disruption.

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<sup>1</sup> Article: The disciplines of disruption, by Ken Gosnell (April 5, 2018)

- **Disruption that requires a leadership** that can metaphorically juggle many balls at once;
- **Disruption that is** sometimes necessary, so that the ministry or business can truly expand and grow in all of its infinite possibilities.
- So in both examples of the business and church models that I have named; customers and congregants needs; whether we recognize this as our reality or not; involves leadership that can embrace some level of **disruption**.
- In fact I would suggest that being a disruptor is not just something that is helpful to any organization or church; but it is necessary, if we wish to take on the work of the reconciling church.
- **Being a disruptor** is necessary, if we wish to have ministries that reflect the reconciling mission of sharing God's love to all.
- Furthermore, when we learn the art of embracing disruption; we are that much closer to walking the walk of Jesus.
- For if you think about it, Jesus is the best example of what it means to be a disruptor.

- Jesus ministry in fact, was steeped in this idea of disruption.
- For Jesus often practiced the disruptive discipline of challenging the status quo.
- What I love about Jesus was his quest for always finding a better way for communities to be able to thrive together.
- Jesus often disturbed the religious leaders of the day; challenging what they taught, versus the actual words of the Bible.<sup>2</sup>
- Sharing more on the article that I read, **Jesus practiced the disruptive discipline** of how he invited others to partake in ministry with him.
- Jesus was able to see the heart of individuals in a way where their gifts in everyday occupations, could be used for the kingdom of God.
- **Jesus practiced disruptive ministry** in how he created new models for ministry.
- Jesus was always on the look out for those who could help advance the kingdom of God and was not content to

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<sup>2</sup> "The disciplines of disruption," Ken Gosnell

just stand by and watch the old way of doing things continue to progress.

- **Jesus disrupted** human history and changed humankind and the world.
- Jesus even practiced the disruptive disciple of committing to new beliefs.
- For disruption does not happen without risk and total commitment.
- **Disruptors are** risk-takers, who are willing to give everything, in order for the vision to come to completion.
- In this case the vision that Jesus was trying to bring alive in our journey that we begin with Palm Sunday; was a vision that included a new commandment;
- **A new commandment** of love.
- **A new commandment**, that invited people to love God and to love their neighbor.
- **A new commandment** that was disruptive all in itself;
- For learning this message that God aligned with the hungry and the thirsty;
- Learning that God took it personal when you or I overlook those who are marginalized;

- Learning that *whatever you or I do not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me;*” (Matthew 25: 45)
- What a wakeup call that must have been for the privileged and powers that be;
- That although on Earth, they may be deemed as the powerful leaders and people not to be reckoned with;
- In God’s eyes, no amount of silver or gold or political prestige could change God’s mind on this issue;
- That in the eyes of the Triune God, people being seen and loved is what mattered ultimately to God.
- So much so that if spaces of intentional love were not being made in this way, then God called for a disruption;
- A disruption that might split the Red sea of oppression;
- A disruption that might call for every knee to bow and every tongue to confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord;
- And this Lord is disturbed;
- This Lord is not at rest;
- This Lord does not have joy at the moment;
- For God’s people are perishing in the valley of self, hatred and self indulgent mindsets;

- And because the Pharaohs of the world; that consist of corrupt leadership and systemic models steeped in privilege and oppression, will not let God's go.
- **So this church, is a discussion that I encourage us all to keep having beyond this Sunday message; this new theological concept of disruption; that informs our gospel today.**
- For you and I are witnessing another disruption and disruptor emerge from this text.
- The story tells us in verse 1, *It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him;*
- **2 for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."**
- So in this scriptural sentence, you and I are seeing a disruption attempting to be avoided.
- For the chief priests did not want their festival to be disrupted by the arrest of Jesus they were wanting to make;



- As a side note; The great annual festival here is called **the passover and the unleavened bread**.
- Strictly speaking, the Passover was one day, followed by seven days of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:5, 6). But at this time the whole period of eight days was often referred to by either name.
- However, the reason why they were desperately trying to avoid this disruption of arresting Jesus, was because they were afraid to attempt it during the feast; knowing that the thousands of Galilean pilgrims were on Jesus side and would cause an uproar.
- But in divine Providence we learn that the arrest did take place apparently during the feast time.
- Why? Because I stopped by to suggest that sometimes shady conspiracies such as what the chief priests were trying to secretly do in discreetness needs to be exposed, disrupted and more!
- But this point is a point that will most likely be fleshed out more in the week ahead, as we travel with Jesus and bear his cross together.

- For now though, the biggest disruption that we are witnessing, is the disruption of the feast through the The anointing of Jesus at Bethany; by none other than a woman whose mere presence was a disruption all in itself.
- A woman that is not named specifically in this passage; as a lot of stories in the Bible, tend not to reveal the name of women nor tell their entire stories;
- This is a concern that is a disruption in my own engagement with this story if I am honest;
- For although most would agree that Mary Magdalene from Bethany is the woman of the hour in this text;
- It still bothers me that Mark did not name her...
- Perhaps Mark did not want us to get hung up on her past or her potential sins;
- Either way my goal is to give this nameless woman a name today;
- For in my eyes she is the ultimate disruptor, that teaches us all how to get the job done; if you and I ever wanted to see how to shake things up for the glory of God.

- For what most scholars would have consensus on, is that the anointing being described in this story, actually took place on Friday or Saturday evening; before the Triumphal Entry of Jesus.<sup>3</sup>
- And why this is something to celebrate for all the women in particular who question their efficacy as a leader, teacher, preacher, mom, businesswoman, wife and more know;
- That out of all of the people who influenced Jesus and prepared a way for his mission towards the most important event that would change the world;
- It was this **so called nameless woman**, who had the privilege to bless Jesus and anoint Jesus head with oil;
- **An act** of worship;
- **An act** of praise;
- **An act** that would allow Jesus to face the metaphorical cup that he once entertained briefly the idea of passing him by;

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<sup>3</sup> Earle, R. (1966). [The Gospel according to St. Mark](#). In *Matthew-Acts* (Vol. 4, pp. 183–184). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- **An act** that should inform all people who may be fearful in standing up for what is right;
- **An act** that should encourage all who may be questioning if they have the fortitude to handle the trials that may attempt to derail their own personal call for justice, love and inclusivity for all;
- That yes we are enough when we do this disruptive work, because God says we are enough!
- In this disruptive act we are all learning more about today, you and I are witnessing this idea that in spite of all of this woman's naysayers and complainers who were disgusted by her audacity to disrupt such a feast;
- Who were up in arms by her audacity to waste this costly perfume;
- In an act of spontaneous love and uncalculating devotion and unprecedented disruption, this nameless woman, broke the narrow neck of the alabaster flask and poured all of its contents on the Master's head;
- Revealing to the world the power of a disruptor who have discovered who and whose they are;

- Showing the world what true love of God looks like at its finest;
- A (what some might call) reckless love for God, that is not concerned with being judged, admonished or even cast away;
- **A love** and awe of God, that gives us today, a template of the love that we might strive to have for God and model towards our neighbor;
- **A love** that perhaps even helped Jesus make his way towards the fanfare celebration we are about to explore in our second service today;
- **A love** that will carry Jesus through when the praises of Hosanna turns into shouts for his blood to be shed;
- For this disruptor according to Jesus; “She anticipated to anoint my body for the preparation for burial;” Jesus says in vs 8 of our gospel....
- A woman who would be proven to be the only follower of Jesus, who caught the significance of His teaching about His coming death and resurrection.
- What a wondrous love is this we are witnessing through this one act of extravagant love;

- **On Fridays, I try to carve that out as my time for sermon preparation.**
- I had it all perfectly planned;
- I dropped my dogs off to the groomers at 8;
- I made it to the office at 8:45 or so;
- I logged into my computer,
- I prepared to write/type;
- I did not type one word out, for the disruptions started.
- Disruptions that involved my immediate attention;
- For it soon became apparent that the needs of the community that I am striving to serve with all that I have; with God guiding me every step of the way;
- It became apparent that the community did not need a preacher with a good sermon;
- **They needed** a disruptor....
- **They needed** a disruptor that could mediate;
- **They needed** a disruptor that might facilitate;
- **They needed** a disruptor that could innovate;
- **They needed** a disruptor that could carve out space for prayer, collaboration, conversation and more;

- So that harmony, peace, vision and most importantly love could burst through, in all of its glory.
- So Friday was a day that I did not get anything on my to do list done;
- A thought that initially brought me angst;
- Until today, I am presented with this thought that I leave you with until next time;
- That on Friday, perhaps I did actually write my sermon;
- Perhaps I wrote and completed my sermon; because the sermon wrote itself;
- For the minute the Spirit of the Lord informed me to stop what I was doing, to respond to the needs of those around me;
- The sermon wrote itself... for the sermon came alive literally;
- The metaphorical alabaster jar was busted wide open;
- For the people had been seen, loved and heard.
- Making space for the “kindom” of infinite love to come into fruition.
- So the sermon was written, because the sermon wrote itself!

- Causing me to celebrate, that this type of sermon is perhaps my best one yet!

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**Sunday: March 28, 2021**

**First Lesson: Isaiah 50: 4-9a**

**Gospel Lesson: Mark 11: 1-11**

**Sermon Series: Holy Disruption Part 2**

**Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel**

**We are kicking off palm Sunday with a new sermon series entitled; Holy Disruption.**

- This is a series where in both our 8:30 and 10:45 worship services, you and I will be identifying the disruptions that we might encounter in our scriptures, that might inform us on both the individual and collective level as a church community and world.
- As a side note, I encourage you when you have time to do so; to check out part 1 of this message; as it explains some of these theological concepts more in detail.



- I will though, offer some level of repetition in our message today, to give you some context and framework for where I am going today.
- So let's explore a little more, before diving into our gospel this morning, the concept of disruptions that I am talking about.
- I am thinking about **disruptions that** perhaps may or may not have been welcomed;
- I am exploring disruptions that may or may not have even been anticipated;
- With this idea that disruptions are perhaps necessary, so that space can be made for God's activity in our lives, in our communities and our world.
- So at this moment, I will be addressing **the heart of the church** and the community and global issues that surround us.
- So allow me first to define and clarify what I mean by disruptions; to ensure that we are all on the same page.
- So one definition for **a disruption**, is defined as a disturbance or problems which interrupt an event, activity, or process.

- **A disruption** is a break or interruption in the normal course or continuation of some activity, process, etc.
- **A disruption** can be a radical change to an existing industry or market due to technological innovation.
- So a disruption is not necessarily a bad thing as I stated in the earlier sermon and will reiterate now;
- For some of our greatest leaders, CEO, innovators and more, have the quality of disruption as part of their professional repertoire if you think about it.
- As it pertains to the new business models that are part of our reality today; it has been noted that customers want things done faster, better, quicker and with less,<sup>4</sup> according to an article that I read entitled, “The Disciplines of Disruption,” by Ken Gosnell.
- As it pertains to ministry, parishioners over time have identified similar needs as it pertains to their clergy.
- Congregants have begun to realize that their pastors and ministerial leaders need to be more than just good preachers and teachers.

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<sup>4</sup> Article: The disciplines of disruption, by Ken Gosnell (April 5, 2018)

- Pastors must be visionaries, innovators; have business savvy and more.
- So this is the school of thought and exploration that I am bringing to our gospel this morning.
- In the earlier sermon, we looked at Mark's account of the nameless woman who scholars identify to be Mary of Bethany in all of her disruption; interrupting the feast of Unleavened Bread, to anoint Jesus with perfume.
- The significance for why our lectionary readings include this story of presumed Mary Magdalene with her alabaster jar of perfume, is because she would be the one who would anoint Jesus, before he entered into the triumphal parade that we are about to explore further today.
- This nameless woman in Mark's story, would be the one whose disruptive act of worship and love, would symbolize the powerful preparation of Jesus body in the days to come when he would be murdered.
- So this is why this fanfare celebration would prove to be one of triumph.

- For this parade so to speak, is not like the Macy's Day parade held in NYC on Thanks giving day; that I often would love to watch/attend as a younger girl.
- For as I submerge myself into this text, this celebration is one of triumph; because it was literally Jesus funeral march;
- So for me, the most disruptive thought in my mind, is that Jesus knew all of this and still proceeded forth anyway.
- **Jesus the ultimate disruptor** of status quo, systems of oppression and marginalization and pursuer of justice and love for all, willingly took his position in this morbid parade;
- **This morbid parade**; where shouts of Hosanna were difficult to discern whether they were of praise or lament/distress;
- For as I preached this time last year, the word Hosanna actual has a dual meaning;
- "Hosanna" refers to our call to praise God.

- Hosanna, however, has two meanings: one referring to praise, and the other a cry for God to save His people.<sup>5</sup>
- So this is the tension that is emerging from this text I believe;
- On Palm Sunday, you and I are witnessing a triumphal entry of Jesus disrupting the lives of all;
- Palm branches being waved in the air;
- Seemingly being portrayed on the surface; a celebration of fans that one would hope has a similar level of zeal and love of presumed Mary of Bethany, who anointed Jesus head for such a time of this;
- However, most of us who have attended several Palm Sunday services and messages of our day;
- Sits with the sobering reality of knowledge, that not every one who shows up is always your biggest fan; that is a sermon all in itself isn't it?!
- That not everyone who shows up under the guise of support and praise for your accomplishments, success and achievements are really there to do so.

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<sup>5</sup>VOL 1 ISSUE 1  
On Christian Jargon  
BY BESORAH WON

- And this hard truth and painful lesson would reign true for Jesus as well;
- For there were folks who were not happy with this type of disruption at all.
- They were incensed **that this disruptor**, had the audacity to challenge some of their beliefs.
- They were challenged **that this disruptor Jesus**, had the audacity to make space with this idea that *the first would be last and the last would be first. (Matthew 20:16)*
- **Some of them were upset**, because they benefitted from the status quo;
- **Some of them were upset** because they benefitted from the privilege of being first.
- **Some of them were upset** because they benefitted from being seen only;
- So this disruptor Jesus, was someone that they had to get rid of, and get rid of quickly.
- **However, the disruptor continues on, even in the midst of all of these realities;**
- Mark in our gospel goes on to say as I attempt to dramatize this story, that the two disciples—were these

Peter and John (cf. Luke 22:8)?—**found a colt tied at the door without in the open street** (v. 4).

- A side note my aspiring theologians may find it interesting for me to name is that his is a typical vivid detail given only in this Gospel.
- One can still see donkeys tied outside doorways in the narrow cobblestone streets of Jerusalem. “A place where two ways met” (KJV) is an attempt to translate the Greek word *amphodon* (only here in N.T.), which literally means “a road around.” But at this time it was used simply to mean “street.”<sup>6</sup>
- Either way, the disciples placed their outer garments on the colt, to form a saddle.
- Many of the jubilant Galilean pilgrims even cast their robes on the path as a carpet for Jesus to ride on.
- Others cut from the fields **branches**—not the same Greek word for “branches” in Matthew 21:8, but literally “litters of leaves.”

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<sup>6</sup> Earle, R. (1966). [The Gospel according to St. Mark](#). In *Matthew-Acts* (Vol. 4, pp. 171–172). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- With the intent of giving a royal welcome to their “King,” as Luke 19:38 indicates.
- Mark reports their cry as: **Blessed is the kingdom that comes, the kingdom of our father David.**
- All this shows that the Galileans were ready to accept Jesus as their Messiah, even though the Jerusalem Jews and leaders rejected Him.
- **They rejected the disruptor** and his message.
- **They rejected this disruption** altogether, for things have been just fine from their point of view;
- Furthermore, **their rejection of Jesus basically highlighted that they were ok** with the marginalization,
- **They were ok** with the inequity of resources and needs;
- **They were ok** that some would go without, so that they may have in abundance;
- **They were ok** with it all.
- And so this is a hard truth that I will apply to the church as a whole to think about it;
- This idea that when you and I are not open to the disruptions that occur around us;
- **Disruptions that may challenge** some of our traditions;



- **Disruptions that may challenge** some of our comfort levels;
- **Disruptions that may require** us to have some level of adaptability;
- **Disruptions that may require us to have** a change of heart;
- So that spaces can be made for the sections of our world, that are still being held by the Pharaoh and harsh institutions of today;
- **Spaces where people** that are in our reconciling mission of gender, age, race, creed and more have been initially shut out;
- Then as a church we are essentially saying that **we are ok with others not being ok;**
- **We are suggesting that we are ok** that there are some who are still being held in metaphorical Egypt like the Israelites;
- When we as the global church are resistant to this idea that sometimes disruption is necessary for God's kingdom to thrive in infinite love, inclusion and acceptance for all;

- **When we're resistant** to adaptation;
- **When we are resistant** to innovation;
- **When we are resistant** to change;
- **When we are resistant** to incorporating a new vision, that might help the new commandment of Jesus to love God and love neighbor to flourish and thrive,
- Then our resistance is essentially saying that we are ok with the status quo, **even if the status quo** causes harm;
- **Our resistance essentially rejects** the new commandment to love God and love neighbor period.
- For my aha moment is that to love your neighbor is to love God.
- In Matthew 25, my aha moment is that when Jesus says that whatever you did not do for the least of these; you did not do for me;
- Then perhaps when we do not make spaces to love our neighbor, then perhaps we are not loving God;
- For up until now, I always saw the new commandment as two distinct parts that do not necessarily inform one another.

- My thought process was something like this; First Part... love God.....check I can say that I love God so I mastered that.
- Second part.... love neighbor....ok still got some work to do...but not too shabby....
- Folks, I think I have clarity that there is no first or second part in my level of theological engagement and just working in the ministry for as long as I have.
- I am seeing at the same time, along with the scriptures are informing me more and more, that this commandment is one collective statement.
- It is not two independent commandments that do not relate to one another;
- On the contrary....it is noted as the new commandment...as one unified idea.
- It is a **new commandment** that goes hand in hand; that to love God, you must love your neighbor; for they are one in the same.
- You see, Jesus lifted up to the disciples then and is lifting up to us now, to love one another as he has loved them.

- **This new commandment** is similar to the command to love one's neighbor as oneself, but it differs in two ways.
- First, **the new commandment** does not focus on the love people have for themselves but on the love they receive from Christ.
- Furthermore, the love Jesus gives, becomes the source and standard for Christian love.
- Second, the **new commandment** speaks of loving one another, emphasizing the mutual quality of love.
- **The new commandment** is a community-building commandment.
- Therefore as people in the Christian community show love for one another, they express the love they receive from Christ.
- Jesus makes such acts of loving service a form of Christian witness.
- The way the world comes to know about the love of Christ, is through the love that takes shape in Christian community.

- So the work of the reconciling ministry is to make space for this new commandment, where all people can come together in community.
- Which also means that **if there is some level** of our ministries that do not reflect the collective whole of the neighborhood that surrounds us;
- **If there is some level of our ministries**, that do not strive to represent and inform other aspects of our collective story;
- **Not just the aspects of our story** that only benefits us;
- **Not just the aspects of our story** that keeps us comfortable;
- **Not just the aspects of our story**, that only we can relate to and identify with;
- **Then it is time for a holy disruption**, because there are people in our communities that are not being seen.
- **It is time for a Holy Disruption**, because there are people in our communities whose spiritual gifts, insights, abilities and stories are not being recognized;
- **It is time for a Holy Disruption**, to make space for not just one of the metaphorical lepers (because society

deemed them as lepers) to return back to Jesus and say thank you...I'd like to know more about you Jesus.

- Our work is to try to reach all of those who have been deemed lepers, because of their gender, age, disability, socioeconomic status, education, creed, race, sexual identity and more— to return back;
- To proclaim to them all to **come on back home**; like the prodigal son and know that they can do so;
- Because as a church **we have disrupted** the status quo;
- As a church **we have disrupted** and challenged our need for comfort at the expense of others discomfort;
- As a church, **we have disrupted everything** that has kept people out for so long, because of the harm that the church as sometimes exacerbated; when we have allowed our own ideologies to replace the theology of who God is and who is apart of God's covenant;
- We have created this disruption so that we can confidently announce to the estranged family of God; **to come back home!**
- To the single parents trying to make ends meet; **come back home...**

- To the people considering if their life is worth living;  
**come back home.**
- To the heartbroken, downtrodden, unseen and unheard community; **come back home!**
- Come back home....for we have placed ourselves under a spirit renovation;
- Come back home... because we have made space just for you.
- **It is time for a Holy Disruption!**