

Sunday 8/15/21

Scriptural Lesson: 1 King 2: 10-12; 3: 31-34

Sermon Series: Holy Momentum Part 1

Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

We are beginning a new sermon series entitled Holy Momentum.

- **So the idea behind this sermon series is that now that we have spent a considerable time talking about movement; i.e. moving out of our comfort zones, or moving out of our boxes/bubbles; into a place of intentional reconciliation work; now we are going to spend some time on naming what preparing for this work looks like in detail.**
- So my preaching hope and goal is to begin laying out a foundation for how you and I might begin the process of building momentum, keeping our momentum and sustaining our momentum for the work that lies ahead.
- And so just to make sure that you and I are on the same page as far as what I mean by Holy Momentum;

momentum defined is a **product of the mass of a particle and it's velocity.**

- **Momentum** is a vector quantity; meaning it has both magnitude and direction.
- Isaac Newton's second law of motion states that the time rate of change of momentum is equal to the force acting on the particle.
- So when I am using the term Holy Momentum, what I am essentially trying to plant within all of us, is a mustard seed of **increasing forward motion.**
- Because the reality is that once we step out of our boxes, there is a sense of raw vulnerability and exposure that tends to grip us...
- For the first question that typically comes to our minds is; “ok I have stepped out on faith in my church; my work; my family; my life.....now what?”
- **How do I** get started in this unfamiliar uncharted territory?

- **How do I begin** a journey where the steps are not always clear before me?
- **How do I begin** a journey to a place that I know I am interested in going to; but I am not sure if I have all of the instructions that I need, or the tools that I need, or even the ability emotionally, spiritually, physically or financially to get to where I need to be?
- These are perhaps some of the questions that some of you may have in our church right now; as we transition into year three together;
- Furthermore, I want to thank all of you who are in this worship space and watching online who have decided to stay on this metaphorical boat with myself and this pastoral team and staff;
- For just like the boat caught in the storm in the Bible in the story of Matthew 8 beginning at verse 23;
- *Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.*
24 *Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was*

sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

- I stopped by to suggest that at times as I look over our journey together, it felt like we were going to drown....
- **At times, it felt like** we were going to drown from the waves of racial injustice and oppression...
- **At times, it felt like** we were going to drown from the waves of transitions on all levels;
- **At times, it felt like** we were going to drown financially; because the storms of Covid and now this Delta Variant and more have been relentless...
- **At times, it felt like** we were going to drown; **sometimes it feels like we are still drowning**, because every day brings new challenges, new levels of awareness, new demands of our time, new evidence that there will be more questions, unknowns and even more changes that are out of our control;
- **At times, sometimes**, it feels as if we are drowning....

- And yet why we still keep doing what we are doing; is because of the still small voice within us that seems to echo the words of Jesus as I continue to stay in this boat metaphor just a little longer;
- Where verse 26 tells us that towards the disciples who were rightfully concerned that they were going to drown; Jesus said; *You of little faith, why are you so afraid?*”
Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.
- So **what keeps me keeping on** and the mustard seed of faith that I am striving to plant in the midst of this storm that we are still in; is the awareness that the winds and waves will die down some day;
- I stopped by to proclaim that one day, we will find ourselves in a place of calm....
- And how do I know this...
- Well first off, I have never framed it in this manner before, but my faith in Jesus tells me so.
- For as I share a little about my call story and faith formation, I started my theological journey from a place

that began in my twenties when I was called to the ministry from a place of brokenness;

- I was divorced and in emotional shambles and crisis;
- And I was what one would call very spiritual but not religious' for my parents did not go to Church, nor was I raised in the Church;
- So my first stab of learning more about God, essentially began at the same time that I learned how to become a pastor.
- My training began in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and then I transferred my studies to the United Methodist Church; where I began roughly 14 years of embracing a theology that was rooted in the Black Church experience.
- **It was a theology** that taught you to celebrate that the tomb was empty one glad morning, because Jesus got up in spite of being murdered because of his audacious claims of inclusion and love for all people.
- **It was a theology** that taught me to walk by faith and not by sight.

- **It was a theology** that was deconstructed once I entered seminary in Tulsa at Phillips...
- **It was a theology that flatlined** once I entered into my first cross cultural ministry where I no longer was surrounded by the Black Church mothers who would pray the blood of Jesus **over everything** and tell me that everything would be alright;
- It was a theology that got even more muddled for me, once I began to experience communities where the Bible was not the authority, where Jesus was just a great man that one should inspire to model after...
- **It was a theology** that began to rebuild in me, once I stepped into the role as a solo pastor and now I am in the role of a senior, mentoring pastor; where in many ways I am seeing myself where Pastor Caity is right now in her own ministerial journey;
- And now today, I can testify that my faith is restored to know and trust that I believe in Jesus Resurrection more now than ever,

- And this is because I have learned that I can maintain my belief in Jesus; at the same time work with others who may not be where I am in my faith journey...
- But I have arrived to this conclusion..that it is still ok... that this acknowledgment is not even a dealbreaker for the work we are aspiring to do as it pertains to living in this Reconciling community;
- For my new found awareness is embedded in the Wesleyan quadrilateral of Scripture, Reason, Tradition and Experience;
- That informs me that the theological steps that I took to get out of my own comfort zone, box or bubble with the help of the Holy Spirit;
- That how this process plays out in others will look different....
- And this is ok....it is more than ok!
- But what I am also naming for us all is that once you and I become intentional in working through this Wesleyan Quadrilateral on a regular basis; this is how we begin to build momentum.

- For it is a process that we all must go through; nit we wish to do this reconciling work.
- **And so where our scripture comes into play even though I have been also speaking Solomon's process indirectly through this conversation;**
- Is that Solomon's will help us to build our momentum in our work....
- Because if you walk with me in our story the I will speak to more directly now;
- In this section of David's final counsel to Solomon; as the Word tells us that David is transitioning on; the stress is on young Solomon's realistic handling of some situations which have come to him as a legacy from the reign of his father....David.
- So David specifically mentions two problems, namely, Joab (vv. 5–6) and Shimei (vv. 8–9).
- In order to maintain a strong Davidic dynasty, these two men must be eliminated according to David.

- So this is a long way of saying that Solomon had an enormous task to take on.
- For after Solomon had secured his reign by removing all rivals, as related in 1 Kings 2, he sought to improve his political career by using not only marriage but also religion for political expediency.
- **Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter** (v. 1).
- The alliance with Egypt strengthened Solomon's rule.
- He also **sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places** (v. 3).
- Solomon's political aspirations apparently motivated his reprehensible religious activities.
- He seemed possessed with one concern above all others: to be successful in his rule over the kingdom.
- So one day, in a dream, Solomon was confronted by the Lord Jehovah.

- He expressed a basic honesty in this meeting as he admitted his inward concern about governing the strong state of Israel.
- Solomon acknowledged a sense of unpreparedness and inadequacy.
- Behind his facade of international diplomacy and religious practice, Solomon in the presence of God acknowledged his own weakness.
- **I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in (v. 7).**
- So inquiring minds may wonder, how did Solomon proceed to achieve all of his aspirations in leadership and more?
- How did Solomon take steps forward to doing the work that lied ahead in the midst of his acknowledged sense of unpreparedness and inadequacies?
- At Gibeon, Solomon met the Lord, and he was humbled.
- Now it is true that he did not always maintain the humility which he showed at Gibeon, but the

experience of the divine that came to him corrected his spiritual focus at least momentarily.

- Where Solomon's ambitious efforts to secure his political future seemed impotent in the presence of the Lord of Israel.
- So when **God said, Ask what I shall give you**(v. 5).
- Solomon answered in humility, **Give your servant therefore an understanding heart to judge this people** (v. 9).
- Church family, Solomon asked for discernment...
- Solomon asked for wisdom....
- Solomon could have asked for more money or political influence or for more power or prestige;
- But instead Solomon teaches you and I that how we begin to build the momentum for the work that lies ahead;
- Is that we must seek the God of the greater picture on how to do so;

- For the human instinct once we step outside of our boxes/bubbles is to let our emotions take over us;
- And for some of this, what this looks like is we still try to take control over the situations even if we do not have a firm grasp of what is really going on;
- For some of us, once we are out of our boxes, the temptation is to run right back into our boxes;
- For some of us, our emotions of fear, doubt and sometimes the projection of other people's fears or doubts may cause us trepidation in moving forward;
- For some of us, we may tentatively choose to walk forward, but we are still terrified and uncertain if we are moving in the right direction;
- So what I like about Solomon, is that he teaches us that the only way that you and I can really function outside of our boxes/bubbles once we step out of them;
- Is by placing our trust in the One who has the tools and wisdom to lead us;

- And so where this wise discernment process begins to generate the movement and momentum that I am naming;
- It begins with us being willing to allow the Wesleyan Quadrilateral process to take root in our hearts;
- **To be willing to engage** Scripture in a way that we have never done before; asking for wisdom to teach us and prepare us and to inform us what we should do and what we shouldn't do;
- **We must be willing** to engage in our tradition and keep discerning what traditions provides life and sustenance to our work and what traditions might not...
- **We must be willing to engage** our reason and ask tough questions and even be willing to have some of our embedded theology deconstructed and reconstructed as many times necessary so that we may reflect the true heart of God.
- **We must be willing to engage** our experiences and live our experiences fully; for we cannot fast forward

through our challenges and learning opportunities just because it makes us uncomfortable; for it is these experiences that will help us to get that much closer to the heart beat and witness of God...

- So this is the invitation of this sermon series; to help us build, keep and sustain a momentum of intentional forward movement;
- A movement that will help us to see the people; really see the people...
- A movement that will help us to see ourselves; really see ourselves....
- And the good news.. is that we are in an intentional safe space, where we get to do this together.
- Let the people say Amen!

Sunday 8/15/21

First Lesson: 1 King 2: 10-12; 3: 3-14

Gospel Lesson: John 6: 51-58

Sermon Series: Holy Momentum Part 2

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- How do I get started in this unfamiliar uncharted territory?
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- **A movement that will help** us to see the people; really see the people...
- **A movement that will help** us to see ourselves; really see ourselves....
- **Thereby giving us the ability to live out our gospel today;**
- For my aha moment for the disciples then and us now who are still trying to make sense of this concept of what this living bread is all about;
- My aha moment is that you and I will never really discover the living bread, if we resist this process I have been naming through the Wesleyan quadrilateral;

- For in a nutshell the disciples were wrestling with the questions of **What can we do, that we may work the works of God?**
- What could they do to forward this movement which seemed to be taking root?
- For they just witnessed 5000 people physically being fed with 5 loaves and 2 fish.
- Which then **sparked a curiosity** and hunger like they never encountered before;
- **A curiosity that would** invite them into discerning how the physical bread becomes the living bread.
- **A curiosity that made them hungry** for this living bread and how to generate this bread for their communities that surrounded them.
- You see the crowd at Capernaum was a typical, curiosity-seeking group of people similar to who we are today;
- They were a people interested primarily in what gain they might make of this miracle-worker whom they

hoped would prove to be their messiah and their political deliverer from the lordship of Rome.

- Then somewhere, somehow, some of them began to recognize a deeper hunger and longing for reconciliation after being in Jesus midst;
- Thereby realizing that their hunger was more than physical;
- That their lives were more than temporal;
- That there is truly a bigger purpose that we all are invited to live into;
- **That there is a greater love** that will quench our hungry souls and give us that peace to not just know that we are all part of this kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven;
- But now we get to discover how to live into this truth;
- So as a Church, this is what we are creating space for;
- **A space that affirms** that we want you here;
- **A space that radiates** that God wants you here;

- Over the next few weeks, Pastor Caity and myself will be meeting with the various teams that signed their names for different opportunities;
- These training opportunities will happen over the next 12 weeks or so.
- If you are unable to meet at those times we present to you, we will create space to catch those up who still desire to be a part of this process....
- Just know that through this process; the Church is investing in a space where your gifts are cultivated and affirmed;
- We are investing our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness into a space where you can be assured that we want you here;
- All the while remembering that we are building this Holy Momentum together;
- All the while trusting that the great I Am is the One guiding us every step of the way.
- Let the Church say Amen