

Sunday October 1, 2021

Sermon Series: Holy Spectrum: Orange

8:30: Psalm 26 Part 1

Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

- **We are in a new sermon series entitled “Holy Spectrum”;** a series designed to explore the **Rainbow that we have invested in on our lawn that has the words, “ All Are Welcome Here”** along with the social issues, topics, spiritual growth and possibilities contained in it.
- Last week I preached on the first color of our rainbow; the color **red**.
- And in looking at the color **Red**, I used this color as a sort of a generalized introductory; to highlight the **collective struggle** and journey that all persons tend to experience from our society, based off of their education, ability, economic status, gender, race, ethnic group, age or sexual orientation;

- From there I expressed this collective sentiment from various sections of these categories that I have named; realizing that there are other categories that I may not have named; where the overall consensus from the margins, is that we are tired of being engulfed in all of our Red;
- We are tired and have had enough of this red that condemns us, this red that isolates us; this red that definitely oppresses many of us if not all of us;
- Leading me to describe **this red**, in the symbolism of the burning bush of Moses; that upon him inspecting this bush a little further; he becomes enthralled at the sight;
- For yes this bush is on fire, engulfed **by all of this red**;
- But wait, although the bush is ablaze, it is not consumed by this fire, but instead it is ignited by a fire that is being controlled by none other than the Triune God; who is at the center of this Red that represents so many things to so many people;
- And so we learned last week, that instead of being controlled by this red, **we can be ignited by the red**, for the Lord will make sure that whatever trials and

tribulations and roadblocks of oppression and victimization that may come up against us; we will not be consumed by it... **instead we can be** empowered by it; **instead we can be** transformed by it; **instead we can even** learn from our Red experiences and allow God to bring out the possibilities and transformations through this red.

- So if you missed that message, I encourage you to check it out on our website;
- For this sermon series is a comprehensive sermon series that will build upon one another.
- **And so looking at today, the next color that we are going to focus on in our Rainbow mission is the color Orange.**
- My preaching goal this morning, is to provide a more singular focus on a specific section of our society, that definitely has been marginalized and oppressed for far too long;

- **And the way that I would like to introduce this section of our society, is by first telling you a little bit about the United Methodist Women mission and vision statement; for today we are celebrating UMW Sunday this morning.**
- **So** From its beginning, United Methodist Women, has focused on ministries with women, children, and youth.
- The UMW emphasis, focuses on Women who have been empowered by leadership education opportunities, mission education, the Reading Program, tools for advocacy and more.
- These opportunities and more, allow women to act and to empower women in the United States and abroad.
- United Methodist Women also support programs and projects aimed at improving the special needs of women because of their refugee statuses, their immigration statuses, situations in which they are abused, their high illiteracy rate in some countries, their economic dependence, their educational disparities, and much more.

- A special emphasis of United Methodist Women is children, because women care for children.
- The UMW ethos is that if children are raised with safety, security, food, shelter, education, and basic human rights, these children will grow to be loving and secure adults.
- So this is a long way of naming that United Methodist Women believe deeply in responding to Jesus' mandate to "care for the least of these."
- For children often do not have a voice in this world, so United Methodist Women **cares for them and advocates on their behalf.**
- Women often do not have a voice in this world, and so the United Methodist Women **cares for them and advocates on their behalf.**
- Youth often do not have a voice in this world, so United Methodist Women **cares for them and advocates on their behalf.**
- Which as a side note, whenever I am appointed to any church community, one of the first group of people who I normally seek out is a United Methodist Woman...

- Why?
- Because **they care for people and advocates on their behalf.**
- And I don't know about you, but I strive to be around folks who **care about me and will advocate on my behalf;**
- **I strive to place folk** around me who will always have my back...
- So this is who the United Methodist Women are and more.....they are fierce, bold women who seeks to Provide opportunities for others to grow spiritually
 - They Equip women & girls to be leaders
 - They Provide transformative educational experiences
 - They Organize for growth & flexibility
 - They Work for justice through service & advocacy
 - Not to mention, they are a group of women who knows how to make a mean salad and **they will have your back;**
 - Oh I wish I had at least 25 people willing to put their hands together and help me celebrate these women who has the world Back...Amen and Hallelujah!

- **So with that said, the singular focus of orange today that I would like to focus on is women, girls and people who identify as being allies to women and girls along with recognizing those who may self-identify as women and girls.**
- Furthermore, my plan is to do a little bit of a word study on Psalm 26 to help us to talk about women/girls issues and isms. In the second service I will bring the gospel reading into this discussion as well.
- So before I reveal the word that I am getting some Orange energy from, as it pertains to the women/girl struggle; I am going to give a little synopsis of what is going on in this psalm.
- So the psalm itself is not talking about a woman/girl per se....instead biblical scholars would agree that the Psalm is talking about David, who was trying to profess his integrity...
- For we know that although King David was described in the Bible as being a “man after God’s own heart,” (mentioned twice in the Bible; the first time by Samuel who anointed him as King Saul’s successor and then in 1

Samuel 13: 14 where it says *The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart*”.

- We also know that David made a lot of mistakes, adultery, murder, scheming and more;
- Leading him to also write psalms such as Psalm 51:10: **Create in me a clean heart**, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
- And so as a woman reading this psalm, I am relieved to hear and witness that **it is not just women/girls** who face these types of issues of feeling the need to profess our integrity....
- For David reveals to us that this sentiment is most likely part of the collective human condition;
- The human condition that informs us that we all seek value and affirmation of our self worth;
- Furthermore, I can't help without risk of sounding too partial in the pulpit; to suggest that women/girls tend to experience some of these sentiments that David is naming in this Psalm; just a little bit more than the rest of our society; for from the very beginning similar to the African American struggle; women from the beginning

had to fight for their humanity and reclaim our identity has valued human beings that are not someone else's personal property.

- Hence why the first word in this psalm that is giving me major Orange energy is the word Vindicate...where the first verse of our psalm says **Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.**
- For the word Vindicate defined, just to ensure that we are all on the same page together, means to **clear (someone) of blame or suspicion and to show or prove to be right, reasonable, or justified.**
- And why the word vindicate is giving me such Orange energy this morning as it pertains to Women/ girls/ children in particular is because **in so many instances**, women have been vilified, sexual trafficked, fetishized, marginalized and victimized,
- **In so many instances** women/girls have been raped, murdered, silenced and abused and viewed and seen as personal property.

- **In so many instances**, women/girls/children have been overlooked, undervalued, under appreciated and unseen,
- **In so many instances**, women/girls, children have been enslaved, are still enslaved and stripped of all integrity, worth, value and more;
- **We have been** taunted, **we have been** scolded, **we have been** dictated to, **we have been** mansplained too,
- **We have been** body shamed, **we have been** talked down too, **we have been** undermined and controlled on every level;
- **We have been** held to these ridiculous expectations of being a superwoman, a super mother, a super model who must always have a smile while doing so and keep our mouths shut while doing so....
- Or we may be labeled as a man-hater, feminist nazi, irrational and reckless witch; because I can't say the real word that rhymes with it.
- And so if you think that I am just speaking on a soap box this morning just because I am a woman, then may I

suggest that you are part of the problem and not the solution....

- Furthermore, I love men...I promise I really do....
- I love my husband and my son and my late dad and all men...I definitely do...
- But I would be remiss, if I watered down this message in the company of those who may not fully know/ understand the women/girl struggle and those who self identify as a woman/girl;
- For I stopped by to declare that the women/girls/children are in that burning bush I preached about last week too...
- Furthermore, I can confidently share that **we have had enough.**
- **We have had enough** of the lack of women in positions of power;
- **We have had enough** of patriarchy that is especially evident in the realm of politics, churches, areas of employment and even more;
- **We have had enough** of not having enough women at the table; from the economy to climate change to

criminal justice reform to national security, all issues are women's issues—but I believe a key to tackling the challenges we face is ensuring women are at the table, making decisions;

- **We have had enough** of sexism, racism and economic inequality...
- **We have had enough** of trauma-centered feminism; where the threat of harm on women/girls is a human constant;
- **We have had enough** of not having access to equal opportunity; where despite decades of notable progress, at home and abroad, a reality in which opportunities are not defined by gender has yet to be universally achieved.
- **We have had enough** of the overall lack of respect that women/girls/children receive overall as it pertains to our abilities to navigate our careers, mother our children or even choose to not have children;
- **We have had enough** of the increasing rates of maternal mortality where 830 women die every day from Preventable causes related to pregnancy;

- **We have had enough** of the violence and abuse and rape where statistics inform us that a woman/girl will have at least one instance if not more of one of these gross offenses done to them...
- **We have had enough....**
- And our righteous anger is bubbling to the surface **in this sea of orange**, because we are not quite at the level of red; for many of us feel bound by all of these stigmas placed on us; that we have been taught not to declare our full red;
- Many of us feel bound by even the fact that the first book of the Bible even explicitly states that God has cursed us, by way of Eve; where God is stated as saying to this woman, “ I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in Pain you shall bring forth children; our desire shall be for your husband;
- A verse that even I used to take at face value, as I was entering into a difficult divorce with two small babies many moons ago and starting my own pastoral ministry in a sea of shame and low self-esteem;

- But now I thank God that through education, prayer and life learnings and experiences;
- The great I am has encouraged me over the years to dig deeper into this story of creation; to understand that even in this statement made to Eve; the patriarchal slant had unfortunately made its way into the Word of God even then; not just in this instance dare I say;
- But in many other instances; from the woman who was going to be stoned for adultery, to the Woman with the issues of Blood; from the woman waiting for Crumbs from the table where the male disciples ate, to the bent over woman who could not raise up and see the sunshine;
- From the woman at the Well, to Mary Magdalene who I still can't discern if whether she was a prostitute or demon possessed;
- For is there a such thing as a demon possessed prostitute?
- Did the two virgin daughters really seduce their father Lot without him being completely aware?

- Why did that concubine in the book of Judges get raped and dismembered into 12 pieces?
- Was Delilah and Jezebel really that bad?
- You see these questions and more is why it is hard for me to be partial up here;
- For from the beginning, women/girls/children have been dealt with what feels like an impossible hand from society, leading us to cry out **Vindicate us oh Lord...**
- And the liberating moment for women/girls/ children is to be informed today that by God's standards and sentiments....all of the ugly, evil and horror that has been done towards women, girls and children **are not what God has supported;**
- I stopped by to declare that they are not of God's heart;
- You see contained in these biblical stories, there are two things we are witnessing;
- **We are witnessing first off** in my eyes, a group people just like us; going through their daily lives; trying to discern their own way; trying to discern God's movements; we are witnessing a culture of people living

their lives, in the best way they can understand on how to do so;

- **The second thing we are witnessing** and this involves the preaching and studying tasks of us all; is to discern God's movements and actions within all of it.
- It is the preaching goal for you and I to be able to discern what parts of the Bible is part of the social infrastructure of that day and where God's movement is in all of it;
- Furthermore this is why I tend to use the phrase that we must learn who and whose we are;
- For the more we begin to learn more about the character of who God is and who God is not; the more we will be able to discern what God's movement is and what God's movement is not!
- **So today, I am planting a seed to all of us self-identified women/girls in particular; to invite us to consider who God is and who God is not.**
- I want us to pause and really consider what God has said and what God has not said.

- For to help me to bring this message forth in a way that I pray will liberate us this all this morning; I did a bit of crowd sourcing online and in our community;
- Where on Facebook I invited all women/ girls and allies to women and girls; to name some of the hurdles and disparaging comments that people have said to them or witnessed and I warn you in advance as you read these statements on the screen...that these words are hard... these words are brutal; hence why our orange as women/girls and children are beginning to emerge to the surface;
- In addition, I want you to take a look at all of this orange in this sanctuary that bears just a small sampling of the issues that women/girls and children face on a daily basis; (silenced, low self-esteem, mental health, gender discrimination, hate, violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault/attacks, victimization, divorce, sexuality, body shaming);
- And so taking all of this in...I invite us to ask ourselves... is this how God really views her children?
- Is this how God really feels about us?

- Is this what God has said about us?
- You see in a nutshell, I stopped by to suggest that God is witnessing all of this orange just as we are too;
- God is in fact inviting us to dig deeper into our faith and our personal stories to understand the Essence of who God really is and who God is not;
- To understand what God's movements really are and what they are not;
- To invite us at the core of all of this orange to begin to consider who God is and who He is not;
- To invite us to open our eyes widely and to tune into our spiritual hearts;
- To be able to see who we really are and who we are not;
- To begin to understand that our Orange does not define us, but instead our orange unites us;

- **For through the Triune God, the prayer is that we might begin to understand that God resides at our very core;**
- **That by His grace; by Her grace; we stand together and begin to realize our orange potential; (start showing the strong pictures and one by one each woman begins to flip their orange sign over)**
- And it is through this awareness we learn that we don't have to be silenced; that we do have a voice and it is impactful;
- The prayer is that we might learn that we should have high esteem, for God has high esteem for us;
- **To learn that we are** mentally strong;
- **To learn that we can** embrace being a woman and be confident in doing so;
- **To learn that we are loved and lovable;**
- **To learn that we do and should always have autonomy over our bodies and what is done to them;**
- **To understand** that we are not responsible for any sexual assault/attack;

- **To understand that we are not victimized** but we are made victorious;
- **To understand that** we are beautiful in every way just the way we are;
- **To understand that** we are infinitely wondrous in every way and that God sees us all in this same light;
- The prayer is that today may begin a movement where all of us women/girls/children in particular; might allow the triune God to transform these orange words , trials and roadblocks; and turn them into possibilities that might reflect a new potential and growth opportunity for ourselves;
- So that we might live into our Orange potential fully;
- Allowing us to adopt the sentiment behind the words of this Psalm this morning with a measure of confidence and assurance in one united state;

Vindicate us, O Lord,

for we have walked in integrity

For we have trusted in the Lord without wavering.

2

Prove us, O Lord, and try us;

test our hearts and minds.

3

For our steadfast love is before your eyes,
and we walk in faithfulness to you

4

For we are not bound by our Orange;

5

We are not consumed by our Orange;
We are not dictated by this Orange

6

We are united by our Orange;

7

singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all your wondrous deeds.

8

O Lord, we love the house in which you dwell,
and the place where your glory abides within us.

11

Therefore we walk in our integrity that we know comes
from you;

Redeemed by this Orange for we are now declared
victorious.

12

Our foot stands on level ground;

in the great congregation we will bless the Lord today
and forevermore.

Let the Church Say Amen and Hallelujah!

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Sermon Series: Holy Spectrum: Orange Part 2

10:45: Psalm 26, Mark 10: 2-16

Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

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- And in looking at the color **Red**, I used this color as a sort of a generalized introductory; to highlight the **collective struggle** and journey that all persons tend to experience from our society, based off of their education,

ability, economic status, gender, race, ethnic group, age or sexual orientation;

- From there I expressed this collective sentiment from various sections of these categories that I have named; realizing that there are other categories that I may not have named; where the overall consensus from the margins, is that we are tired of being engulfed in all of our Red;
- We are tired and have had enough of this red that condemns us, this red that isolates us; this red that definitely oppresses many of us if not all of us;
- Leading me to describe **this red**, in the symbolism of the burning bush of Moses; that upon him inspecting this bush a little further; he becomes enthralled at the sight;
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- And so we learned last week, that instead of being controlled by this red, **we can be ignited by the red**, for the Lord will make sure that whatever trials and tribulations and roadblocks of oppression and victimization that may come up against us; we will not be consumed by it... **instead we can be** empowered by it; **instead we can be** transformed by it; **instead we can even** learn from our Red experiences and allow God to bring out the possibilities and transformations through this red.
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- For children often do not have a voice in this world, so United Methodist Women **cares for them and advocates on their behalf.**
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- The human condition that informs us that we all seek value and affirmation of our self worth;
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our identity has valued human beings that are not someone else's personal property.

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- **In so many instances** women/girls have been raped, murdered, silenced and abused,
- **In so many instances**, women/girls/children have been overlooked, undervalued, under appreciated and unseen,

- **In so many instances**, women/girls, children have been enslaved, are still enslaved and stripped of all integrity, worth, value and more;
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- **We have been** body shamed, **we have been** talked down too, **we have been** undermined and controlled on every level;
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- I love my husband and my son and my late dad and all men...I definitely do...

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- For I stopped by to declare that the women/girls/children are in that burning bush I preached about last week too...
- Furthermore, I can confidently share that **we have had enough.**
- **We have had enough** of the lack of women in positions of power;
- **We have had enough** of patriarchy that is especially evident in the realm of politics, churches, areas of employment and even more;
- **We have had enough** of not having enough women at the table; from the economy to climate change to criminal justice reform to national security, all issues are women's issues—but I believe a key to tackling the challenges we face is ensuring women are at the table, making decisions;

- **We have had enough** of sexism, racism and economic inequality...
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- **We have had enough** of the increasing rates of maternal mortality where 830 women die every day from Preventable causes related to pregnancy;
- **We have had enough** of the violence and abuse and rape where statistics inform us that a woman/girl will have at least one instance if not more of one of these gross offenses done to them...
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- And our righteous anger is bubbling to the surface **in this sea of orange**, because we are not quite at the level of red; for many of us feel bound by all of these stigmas placed on us; that we have been taught not to declare our full red;
- Many of us feel bound by even the fact that the first book of the Bible even explicitly states that God has cursed us, by way of Eve; where God is stated as saying to this woman, “ I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in Pain you shall bring forth children; our desire shall be for your husband;
- A verse that even I used to take at face value, as I was entering into a difficult divorce with two small babies many moons ago and starting my own pastoral ministry in a sea of shame and low self-esteem;
- But now I thank God that through education, prayer and life learnings and experiences;
- The great I am has encouraged me over the years to dig deeper into this story of creation; to understand that even in this statement made to Eve; the patriarchal slant had

unfortunately made its way into the Word of God even then; not just in this instance dare I say;

- But in many other instances; from the woman who was going to be stoned for adultery, to the Woman with the issues of Blood; from the woman waiting for Crumbs from the table where the male disciples ate, to the bent over woman who could not raise up and see the sunshine;
- From the woman at the Well, to Mary Magdalene who I still can't discern if whether she was a prostitute or demon possessed;
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- Why did that concubine in the book of Judges get raped and dismembered into 12 pieces?
- Was Delilah and Jezebel really that bad?
- You see these questions and more is why it is hard for me to be partial up here;

- For from the beginning, women/girls/children have been dealt with what feels like an impossible hand from society, leading us to cry out **Vindicate us oh Lord...**
- And the liberating moment for women/girls/ children is to be informed today that by God's standards and sentiments....all of the ugly, evil and horror that has been done towards women, girls and children **are not what God has supported;**
- I stopped by to declare that they are not of God's heart;
- You see contained in these biblical stories, there are two things we are witnessing;
- **We are witnessing first off** in my eyes, a group people just like us; going through their daily lives; trying to discern their own way; trying to discern God's movements; we are witnessing a culture of people living their lives, in the best way they can understand on how to do so; We are witnessing this life play out through David in our psalms and peeking at our gospel this morning when the Pharisees are trying to sift through some of their laws as it pertains to divorce and so forth;

this is another example of we seeing how the cultural and social values and norms are presenting itself.

- **The second thing we are witnessing** and this involves the preaching and studying tasks of us all; is to discern God's movements and actions within all of it.
- It is the preaching goal for you and I to be able to discern what parts of the Bible is part of the social infrastructure of that day and where God's movement is in all of it;
- Furthermore this is why I tend to use the phrase that we must learn who and whose we are; because in doing this in depth study, we may begin to be able to distinguish a little more clearly God's activity and humanity's activity.
- For the more we begin to learn more about the character of who God is and who God is not; the more we will be able to discern what God's movement is and what God's movement is not!
- **So today, I am planting a seed to all of us self-identified women/girls in particular; to invite us to consider who God is and who God is not.**
- I want us to pause and really consider what God has said and what God has not said.

- For to help me to bring this message forth in a way that I pray will liberate us this all this morning; I did a bit of crowd sourcing online and in our community;
- Where on Facebook I invited all women/ girls and allies to women and girls; to name some of the hurdles and disparaging comments that people have said to them or witnessed and I warn you in advance as you read these statements on the screen...that these words are hard... these words are brutal; hence why our orange as women/girls and children are beginning to emerge to the surface;
- In addition, I want you to take a look at all of this orange in this sanctuary that bears just a small sampling of the issues that women/girls and children face on a daily basis; (silenced, low self-esteem, mental health, gender discrimination, hate, violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault/attacks, victimization, divorce, sexuality, body shaming);
- And so taking all of this in...I invite us to ask ourselves... is this how God really views her children?
- Is this how God really feels about us?

- Is this what God has said about us?
- You see in a nutshell, I stopped by to suggest that God is witnessing all of this orange just as we are too;
- God is in fact inviting us to dig deeper into our faith and our personal stories to understand the Essence of who God really is and who God is not;
- To understand what God's movements really are and what they are not;
- To invite us at the core of all of this orange to begin to consider who God is and who He is not;
- To invite us to open our eyes widely and to tune into our spiritual hearts;
- To be able to see who we really are and who we are not;
- To begin to understand that our Orange does not define us, but instead our orange unites us;

- **For through the Triune God, the prayer is that we might begin to understand that God resides at our very core;**
- **That by His grace; by Her grace; we stand together and begin to realize our orange potential; (start showing the strong pictures and one by one each woman begins to flip their orange sign over)**
- And it is through this awareness, the prayer is that we feel empowered to know and trust that we don't have to be silenced; that we do have a voice and it is impactful;
- **The prayer is that we might learn that we should have high esteem, for God esteems us;**
- **To learn that we are** mentally, emotionally and physically strong;
- **To learn that we can** embrace being a woman and be confident in doing so;
- **To learn that we are loved and lovable;**
- **To learn that we do and should always have autonomy over our bodies and what is done to them;**
- **To understand** that we are not responsible for any sexual assault/attack;

- **To understand that we are not victimized** but we are made victorious;
- **To understand that** we are beautiful in every way just the way we are;
- **To understand that** we are infinitely wondrous in every way and that God sees us all in this same light;
- The prayer church family within this sanctuary and online, is that today may begin a movement, where all of us women/girls/children in particular; might allow the triune God to transform these orange words , trials and roadblocks; and turn them into possibilities that might reflect a new potential and growth opportunity for ourselves;
- So that we might live into our Orange potential fully;
- Allowing us to adopt the sentiment behind the words of this Psalm this morning with a measure of confidence and assurance in one united state;

Vindicate us, O Lord,

for we have walked in integrity

For we have trusted in the Lord without wavering.

Prove us, O Lord, and try us;
test our hearts and minds.

3

For our steadfast love is before your eyes,
and we walk in faithfulness to you

4

For we are not bound by our Orange;

5

We are not consumed by our Orange;
We are not dictated by this Orange

6

We are united by our Orange;

7

singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all your wondrous deeds.

8

O Lord, we love the house in which you dwell,
and the place where your glory abides within us.

11

Therefore we walk in our integrity that we know comes
from you;

Redeemed by this Orange for we are now declared
victorious.

12

Our foot stands on level ground;

in the great congregation we will bless the Lord today
and forevermore.

Let the Church Say Amen and Hallelujah!