

Tabor Church News

March, 2016

Phil's Ponderings:

"Living Resurrection"

Throughout Lent, we are reflecting on the theme "Living Ink." Our focus is on how the Biblical Story, God's story, continues to live today through our lives of faith. When we catch this vision, we begin to see that our individual stories of following Jesus are all part of God's bigger salvation story.

As we near our celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter, I challenge us as a faith community to think of ways that we can live the story of resurrection today.

Shane Claiborne recently spoke at Hesston College's Anabaptist Visioning and Discipleship Series Conference. On the first evening, Shane told several stories of how the community that he is a part of in North Philadelphia is seeking to live resurrection today even amidst many challenges:

- They are planting urban gardens wherever they can. They even grow plants in old televisions! Furthermore, in a place where there isn't good enough soil, they designed a garden in which the plants grow in water that is full of fish. Both the plants and fish thrive! Growing plants symbolize resurrection.

- They are working to transform abandoned lots into parks. Even though they have been met with resistance, they persevere to design outdoor spaces for the community to gather and play together. Community parks symbolize resurrection and hope.

- They renovate abandoned houses. People who could not otherwise afford a house are given the opportunity to work to help renovate a house that will become their own! Renovating houses symbolizes resurrection and hope.

- Shane had many more stories to tell, and I encourage you to check out his community's website (<http://www.thesimpleway.org/>) and any of his books (start with *The Irresistible Revolution*) to read more.

What are ways that we can live resurrection today? How can we incorporate resurrection and hope into our everyday routines? What experiments shall we try? (If you have responses to these questions, I would love to visit with you about them!)

May we continue to live God's story of resurrection and hope even amidst the darkness of our world.

-Peace, Pastor Phil



Mission Sunday
We are all God's family.

Sunday Worship Themes

March 6 - *Living Ink:*

Turning Over a New Leaf (Lent 4)
Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32;
2 Corinthians 5:16-21;
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
Youth Sunday

March 13 - *Living Ink:*

An Unexpected Twist (Lent 5)
Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126;
Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8
Pastor Phil preaching

March 20 - *Living Ink:*

The Plot Thickens
(Palm Sunday - Lent 6)
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16;
Philippians 2:5-11;
Luke 22:14-23:56
Pastor Phil preaching

March 24 - *Maundy Thursday*

Holy Week Meal and Service

March 27 - *The End of the Beginning*

Easter Sunday
Acts 10:34-43;
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24;
1 Corinthians 15:19-26;
John 10:1-18
Pastor Phil preaching

from the staff...

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Here is our monthly marriage moment: a meaningful memento to married couples to make your marriages marvelous!

John Gottman, marriage researcher, has written a book entitled *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. (If you would like a copy of this book, I would be happy to give one to you as a gift!) In December, we focused on the two different kinds of marital conflict: solvable and perpetual.

Principle 5, "Solve Your Solvable Problems" focuses on the first of these two kinds of conflict. Once you have identified that the problem you are facing is solvable instead of perpetual, Gottman highlights several important steps to working toward a positive resolution of the problem:

1. Soften your start-up.
2. Learn to make and receive repair attempts.
3. Soothe yourself and each other.
4. Compromise.
5. Process any grievances so that they don't linger.¹

In this chapter, Gottman provides exercises for working on each of these important steps so that solvable problems don't become perpetual problems. In the next chapter, Gottman focuses on "Coping with Typical Solvable Problems." I strongly encourage every married couple to have a copy of this book and to work through the principles and exercises. I have several copies of the book on hand and would be more than happy to give you one!

With a little work, you too can make your marriage marvelous ☺!

~Pastor Phil

¹Excerpt From: John Gottman Ph.D. & Nan Silver. "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work." iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/GtdG2.1>



Share an Easter Lily in honor/memory of a loved one on Easter Sunday. Names of those to be honored along with names of those sharing the lilies need to be turned in to the church office by Wednesday evening, March 23 to be listed in the bulletin. Lilies need to be brought to the church, clearly marked on the bottom with the name of the donor, and left in the foyer by noon on Saturday March 26.

Easter



~March 20 - 9:30 am, Palm Sunday Worship
Children's Processional

~March 24 - Maundy Thursday

6 pm, Holy Week Meal, Communion, and Tenebrae Service

~March 26 - 3:30 pm, Easter Egg Hunt, Tabor Church Park

~March 27 - 8:30 am, Easter Breakfast; 9:30am, Easter Worship Service
No Faith Formation

Rosie's Reflections

Grounded. I like this word because it reminds me of stability and strength. Our women's Faith Formation class has been thinking about words that provide special meaning and this one keeps coming to mind. How am I grounded spiritually? When did that begin for me? As I ponder this, several things come to mind.

Family devotions and prayer was an important part of my growing up years and is still important to me. I remember gathering together with my parents and 5 siblings every evening before going to bed. Dad would read from the Bible and then we knelt and took turns praying. I've often looked back on this ritual as one that grounded me in the importance of scripture and prayer in my life. Even though I didn't always understand what was being read, I understood that gathering together as a family was important. I also remember seeing Dad read and study as he prepared to teach adult Sunday school each week. When we were old enough to read, we were also expected to prepare for Sunday school (usually on Saturday night). These rituals were a significant part of grounding me in Christian faith.

For the first 8 years of school, I attended a two-room Christian Day School where traditional lessons were taught along with choir and bible memory. I remember every Friday afternoon our books were put away, and everyone was assigned a chore. We cleaned everything -- bathrooms, floors, blackboards, erasers, etc. Every week several students were also selected to help plan a weekly worship service during this time. I loved thinking and planning with my peers. I don't have copies of those services but they were another vital part of my spiritual growth.

When I was fourteen, I accepted Christ as my savior at a revival service. Nearly every year a crusade would come to our hometown setting up tents for a week of revival meetings. People came from miles around and our family was no exception. Dad made sure we went every night. I loved the music and singing, but I dreaded the long invitations to come forward. It was a scary time as a young child. However, eventually I did go forward at a smaller revival meeting held at our church, and I experienced love, not fear. I really knew Jesus was with me.

When it came time for college, I found my way to Hesston College where my three older brothers had also attended. I studied to be a secretary because that and nursing were normally the route for young women. However, I took a different route during a January Interterm, taking a course in Creative Religious Expression. I also joined a spring tour with a small Gospel team and through these experiences felt God working in me. I was being shaped and grounded in ways yet to be discovered later in life.

These experiences are some of the ways I've been grounded in my Christian journey. It hasn't all been a bed of roses; there are times of frustration and loneliness, yet God finds me again and again. He is faithful even when I am not. With the Psalmist I pray, "*Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.*" Psalm 63:3-4.

~Pastor Rosie

Katherine's Candor

Since catechism began, it has been deeply meaningful to hear testimonies, insights, and questions from youth and members of the congregation. One of the excellent questions raised by the youth was: "What shall we do with the violent stories in the Bible?"

There are no easy answers to this question and people have struggled with this over the centuries. However questions such as this one are important and here is the way that I sought to answer this question:

In the Old Testament, there are a fair number of violent stories. Though humans sometimes participate in this, God is primarily the one who fights for God's people (see Exodus 14). How does this affect how we understand God? Does this image of a Warrior God fit with who we have experienced God to be, both within our own lives and within the broader narrative of the Bible?

It's important to consider that the Hebrew word for violence does not refer to God's violence against humans, but to human violence. As with God's wrath, this is primarily directed at God's own people and is often in response to covenant unfaithfulness. Of the thousand or so references to God's wrath in the Old Testament, in most instances (though not all), it refers to the violent and evil deeds of humans punishing themselves, or God allowing the consequences of our sin to come to pass (see Psalm 37:14-15).

The following are different ways that people (all of whom are seeking to be faithful to the text and see the Bible as authoritative for their lives) have understood God in relation to violence and the violence within biblical stories:

1. The way people have understood God has changed over the years. As Pilgram Marpeck (a 16th century Anabaptist) observes: "The Bible was written over thousands of years, with many different cultural experiences and historical experiences that are bound to affect what is written in each book of the Bible. It is not that God has changed, but the way humanity perceives God and the way God is moving in history has changed and depends on the time and culture that each book of the Bible was written, as well as our own cultural situation when we read the Bible."

2. God has changed over the years, realizing that violence was not the best way to achieve change in human life.

3. God works with people where they are, in their own culture, time, worldview, etc. Throughout the history of Israel, God took whatever practices the people were doing (whether they were in keeping with God's calling for humankind or not) and used these practices for good. God was always able to take what the people were already doing, use it for God's good purposes, and then call people to move beyond these practices into God's better way of living.

4. The people who wrote these stories of violence within the Bible gave in to the human tendency to glorify their past and the human tendency to glorify violence. They spoke of God fighting for them to make it clear that God was with them in every part of their journey.

5. Christ is the standard by which all Scripture is interpreted and applied. By this standard we should discern that ancient **Israel's holy-war mentality was more influenced by the surrounding cultures than by the revelation of God.**

6. Even today, God feels that violence towards others can be an acceptable way of dealing with sin and evil within other people and/or nations.

7. God is most fully revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. We can take comfort that Jesus himself had to wrestle with some of these questions (and whether or not to respond violently to his attackers). Jesus stated more than once, "You have heard that it was said..., but I say to you..." Without throwing out God's revelation of the past, Jesus put God in a new light. And Jesus proclaimed and lived a way of peace and peacemaking through nonviolent means.

Grace's Goodies

Candy Apple Jelly

- 4 cups apple juice
- 1/2 cup cinnamon candies (red hots)
- 1 pkg. (1-3/4 oz.) powdered pectin
- 4-1/2 cups sugar

In large kettle, combine apple juice, candies and pectin. Bring to full rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Stir in sugar; return to full rolling boil. Boil for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat: skim off any foam and undissolved candies. Pour hot liquid into hot jars leaving 1/4-in. head space. Adjust caps. Process for 5 min. in boiling-water bath. Yield about 6 half-pints.

Especially at Christmas time, I decorate the lids with fabric and give them as small gifts, sometimes with zwieback or a scone mix.

Katherine's Candor continued

Regardless of how we understand these stories, they are still troubling. There are no easy answers for how we should interpret these. What then should we do with them? Should we stop reading these stories of violence that trouble us and focus only on those that comfort us? Our discomfort does not mean that the text should not be in the Bible or that it is not authoritative.

"Sometimes, we continue to embrace hurtful texts not because we affirm their answers, but because they force us to confront the important questions." (Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, in responding to Hosea 2). By continuing to read and wrestle with these texts, we can lament these stories, weep over these stories, and use them to remind ourselves that violence does not have the final word and that we can work towards God's peace in the world.

~Pastor Katherine

Tabor Mennonite Church

Devotional

12 Scriptures
Matthew 7:1-5

Digging in My Eye -by Sheri Schmidt

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

I am not what you would call a craftsy person. But when the boys were little, I would become a little obsessed with making them creative cakes for their birthdays. I would start thinking about what I wanted to do months ahead, and spend hours searching the internet for inspiration. I would scour the stores for just the right ingredients and decorations. Then, the night before the birthday I would begin creating.

But invariably something would go wrong – usually right around ten thirty. The cake wouldn't come out of the pan. The frosting came out the color of the months-old spaghetti at the back of the fridge. But, fully committed by that point, I would put my best problem solving skills to work and plow through. Then came the actual decorating. As the night wore on and the frosting began to harden, I could see my creation taking form. But when I finally stood back to admire my handiwork, I would notice a tiny imperfection. That one line of frosting was a little uneven and needed just a little tweak. That one area on top wasn't as smooth as the rest. There was a small crumb imbedded in the frosting. By the time I was done fixing it, I had a cake worthy of top honors on www.cakewrecks.com.

We as Mennonites take pride in our humility. I was raised on the precepts found in this passage in Matthew and others like it, and they have been deeply ingrained in me. I learned to view everyone else as better than me. Never take the last portion of food on the platter. Always let everyone else go ahead of you. Don't impose on others' privacy by asking too many questions. If someone else needs something you have, give it to them. Don't be selfish and ask for things for yourself. Always look at yourself before judging someone else. And the list goes on.

But as I get older, I find myself asking at what point have I dug in my own eye to the degree that it's just a mangled mess of bloody tissue and I can no longer even see? I think I often take this verse too far the other way – having gone from too harshly judging others to too harshly judging myself. In Mark 12:31, Jesus says the second most important commandment is to love our neighbor *as ourselves*. But when I walk into church and see all the deeply spiritual, pulled-together people around me, I become hyperaware of my own shortcomings and imperfections, and I get so busy digging that splinter out of my eye that I then fail to see that those around me are actually doing the same thing. Like my cake disasters, the more I fixate on making myself perfect, the worse it gets. I can try to cover up my failures by hiding behind dark glasses or slathering on a thicker layer of frosting, but it doesn't really fix anything. And it keeps me from helping others dealing with similar struggles.

I finally learned after years of late night birthday cake frustration that I had to find a stopping point or I would end up with an unrecognizable pile of crumbs. I had to accept that my cake would never grace the cover of a baking magazine, and that it was the love for my boys that I put into it that mattered, not whether it came out perfect or not. I have to also accept that God loves me the same way-- just as I am, imperfections and all. It doesn't matter what the cake looks like on the outside-- if I have used the right ingredients, it will still taste great. I just have to learn to stop messing with it and just enjoy its sweet flavor. And to stop digging in my eye so I can see.

March 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	February 29 Joshua 5:9-12	1 Psalm 32	2	3 2 Corinthians 5:16-21	4 Luke 15:1-3; 11b-32	5
6	7 Isaiah 43:16-21	8 Psalm 126	9	10 Philippians 3:4b-14	11 John 12:1-8	12
13	14 Isaiah 50:4-9a	15 Psalm 31:9-16	16	17 Philippians 2:5-11	18 Luke 22:14-23:56	19
20	21 Acts 10:34-43	22 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24	23	24 1 Corinthians 15:19-26	25 John 20:1-18	26
27	28	29	30	31		