

Going Forward Together—Children No More

November 10, 2014

Post Election

Mark 12:35-44

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I propose to show, that we are all children of God, and as people of faith following Christ, like or not we are called to open our hearts and work to to heal the divisions among us, so that we may embody God's longing for our world.

*O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might heal the works of division and reveal that we are all children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, our hearts may be opened, flawed and gifted as we are; that, when he comes again by the power of Your love and the glory of unity, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.***

Good Morning.

I miss the certainty of my childhood.

I miss the certainty of my childhood beliefs and perspectives. Some days I miss the certainty of my faith. Right and wrong, good and bad, all were clearly delineated. Sin and evil were forces largely outside my world, held at bay by my parent's care and love and our collective faith in Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, the United States of America and the United States Marine Corps.

My faith in institutions, for as much as I thought of them, back then, between climbing trees, reading books, and reveling in running around with a pack of friends through neighbors' back yards, [my faith in institutions] was without critique or complaint. I am white, my father although desperately poor as a child, one of 13, his father an immigrant; my dad went to college and became an officer. My mom was a registered nurse. We weren't rich and we weren't poor. We lived the American dream.

I miss the certainty of my childhood, because these days, things are not so clear cut, defined and limited. I now understand that the world is so much more than just my perspective, more than the backyards through which I ran. As a child I didn't have to see or know anymore. "*When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I reasoned like a child, thought like a child,*" as the apostle Paul says, and, "*When I became an adult, I gave up my childish ways...*(1Cor 13:11).

As adults, as grownups, as mature followers of Jesus Christ we are called to move beyond, our childish ways, to venture past the limited perspectives of our own yards.

My world this week, involved voting for Vice President Harris. I voted for her for many reasons, but mostly because I thought it was the most patriotic action, I could take for the country I love.

I have no doubt, and the numbers tell the story that very many of you voted for former President, and now President-elect Trump. And I suspect your vote was also a patriotic action taken for the country you love.

I want to stay in my blue-walled world, for right now I need some nurture and sustenance, for I am afraid: I fear for my safety, for I am an out married lesbian. I fear for our country's security for I foresee NATO collapsing, I worry for transpeople, people who are immigrants, my niece adopted from China, people of color and I worry for friends who are outspoken leaders in the Democratic party. I have fear.

My inclination is to stay and be with people who think like me, agree with me and who I know, love me. Yet if I turn my back and stay in my own yard and my own limited perspective of our country, then I will not grow. I will not learn; I will not change and be transformed, and I will play no role in healing the divisions among us. I will have ignored my call from Jesus.

For those of us whose worlds include sighing in relief, rejoicing in the American red wave, the power and presence of which there is no denying, for our elections as they have always been are safe and secure and accurate, whether we like the outcomes or not, for those today who are hope-filled, if you look only in the mirror, you will not learn, you will not change, you will not grow, and you too will remain only in your neighborhood.

If we stay only in our worlds, NONE of our hearts will be broken open. As people of God, as followers of Christ, we are ALL called to allow our hearts to be broken, called to allow our hearts to be broken open. We are all called to embrace Christ's hope and call for us to be united.

As Pastor Danny Cox says, "Unity does not mean uniformity. Unity does not mean there are no different opinions. Unity does not mean we are free from conflict." Unity does not mean we tolerate, intolerance. Unity does not mean we tolerate the idea that any one of us is second class, or less than. Unity means that we will always respect and defend body and soul, the dignity of every human being; be they of a political persuasion so far from our own, an undocumented worker or an individual whose gender is as fluid as the day is long.

Unity means we are united in the inconvenient truth of Jesus of Nazareth, that in Him we are not only stuck with each other, but we are called, invited and challenged to love each other.

Or as the Franciscan priest and theologian Richard Rohr says,

“A mature Christian sees Christ in everything and everyone else. That is a definition that will never fail you, always demand more of you, and give you no reasons to fight, exclude, or reject anyone.” (The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality can Change Everything We See, Hope for and Believe.)

So, if you were to venture forth past your own yard, who might you reach out to? From whom might you learn? Instead of dodging thanksgiving with relatives who are divided over much more than the value of a wing over a drumstick, who might you listen to? From whom might you learn? Who might help you, help me to break open our hearts?

If we do not do this work, if we as people of faith do not foster this work, lean into this work, pray about this work, learn from this work then we will have missed Christ’s call.

So I make my call, not to the blue among us or the red among us, but to the saints and the sinners, to us all, flawed, frail, followers of Christ to allow our hearts to be broken open, so that our divisions may cease and together we may

Do Justice.

Love Mercy.

And walk Humbly with our God.

Going forward together.

Amen.

Special thanks to Pastor Danny Cox of the Open Table Collective who did a teaching on Unity that I heard last week that got me thinking about how unity can play out in our congregational settings in times of strife. Check out the Open Table Collective at <https://www.theopentablecollective.com>