

June 30, 2024

Pr. Steve

Texts:

In the name of God, Abba/Imma, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Every midwife knows that not until the womb softens can the child find the opening to be born. Every midwife knows.

“Soften the treasure of your heart, my friend, so that the opening may be discovered, and the dark pain you carry may gracefully open and lead you to the never-ending grace.”

The *'Parable of the Sower'* is the key to understanding all of the teachings of Jesus—the condition of our soil is the most important thing. The seed that fell on the path got trampled. The seed that falls in the rocks, [the] roots don't grow. The seed that falls among the thorns—it grows up and then gets strangled by all the concerns of this world. But the seed that falls on fertile ground produces 30-, 60-, 100-fold—Life in Abundance.

One cannot anticipate what happens when the seed of grace and wisdom permeates one of us. That's how the kingdom works, flowing, connecting within each of us to produce an abundance, a life we cannot imagine. But it all depends upon your soil. Is it loose enough for that seed to grow? Or just cramped, like Monday mornings, 'Oh, not again!'

Hardness of heart is the most baffling thing. The entire Scriptures are trying to deal with *'How do people become so hard?'* It is the greatest affliction because nothing can grow there. And in the simplest definition, it means we lose flexibility. When that happens, there's no changing, there's no shift in perspective, there are no options, there are no possibilities, there's no creativity. You can't turn around. You can't do anything different, because *'I'm trying to get a grip'*.

And the outcome of that—victims. *'Because surely I'm not responsible for the problems around me. I don't carry any. Let's blame them together. It's so much fun, isn't it, to be part of the crowd.'* There's energy in it. This is called the mob, and mobbing, and mobocracy, which is the politics of our day. And mobs depend upon conspiracies to thrive. *'You know, you know they're out to get us.'*

But a conspiracy needs a unanimous consent. There's one thing that shatters conspiracies quickly, or gradually, and that is—truth. And that's why doubting is not allowed inside of conspiracies. *Don't you dare change, don't you land in us? We're in this together. We know we're right.* Truth shatters from the inside

So, when are things going to change? That's what I want to know. Aren't we all desperate for the change to happen? And this is why Jesus uses the seed metaphor. He said it [the seed] appears hidden right now, underground, as if nothing is going on. But, actually, the germinating power of transformation is always at work—and when it is revealed, things change.

But there's one thing that Jesus requires of followers now those who want to get Associated now and that is We have to step out of the crowd. We have to step out of the mob. We have to step away from the mob. That heard thinking which destroys human beings.

So there's this woman. She's had this bleeding illness. Twelve years. It wasn't her only her struggle. That was at stake. She, because of her illness, is a public contamination to the religion of the day. She's contaminating everyone by her illness and her presence. She not only has three strikes, she has four strikes against her: she's a woman, she's ill, she is ritually impure—and she lives in dire poverty.

So she decides, '*If I could just touch Jesus, things might change now.*' This is an act of daring and courage, and the mob could have turned on her and killed her on the spot. Everything's at risk here. So, she puts her plan together—after she touches him, she will disappear like that, and escape right get away before anyone knows.

Except Jesus says, '*Who touched me? Who touched me?*' And the disciples say, '*Are you crazy? You're being swarmed.*' Well, how could anybody know? who touched me who touched me and when she steps out of the crowd? Your faith is great.

He doesn't talk about, '*Ain't I cool how much power I got.*' He says, '*Your faith has healed you.*' The daring to make that connection has brought you back to life.

Now why didn't they ignore the whole scene? He could have kept it private. Couldn't he just between us wow. There was a quick zap. Something's going on leave the poor woman alone, but no he makes a scene. He makes a scene. Do you see this woman? Do you see what she has done everything risk for the connection? everything

And the conspiracy against her after 12 years is over., And she is set free.

And that is what the gospel and Grace and Jesus always insist upon—is that compassion will break down and break through any obstacles. Nothing shall prohibit the mercy of God from acting in this world.

The text from Lamentations. That's overwhelming, isn't it?

So many of us praying this these days—surely God's mercies are not over, are they? Are we the first generation to be passed over by God's mercy?

God's faithfulness is never exhausted. Every morning the renewed God's great faithfulness is great. Yahweh is all I have.

Howard might be praying that now, don't you think? And so many more of us, so many people

Yahweh is all I have. And so I shall put my hope in God. God is good to those who trust God, good to all who search for God. It is good to wait in silence for Yahweh to heal. It is good for someone to bear the yoke from a young age, to sit in solitude and silence when it weighs heavy to lay one's head in the dust.

Maybe there's hope

good for the young to Bear the yoke. from a young age

Nobody but the Bible will ever say that this is not about humiliation—it's about humility. Because we're all taken down, aren't we, in the course of a lifetime. Those moments we know when we've had our own heads in the dust, flattened on the earth. There are no other resources—simply the lament that crying out to God is the most important thing—to cry out, *'God where are you? Do not bury the cry?'* That's our connection with God.

Even at Bishop O'Dowd High School, they don't have a program this summer saying, *'Young ones, let's go practice laying our heads in the dust.'* Who wants to go there?

It's good sit. and solitude silence and wait. There may be hope.

So Jesus finally gets to gyrus home (which started this whole gospel story) to meet and heal this little girl. *How old is she? 12 [years] How long was the woman bleeding? 12 years*
The author's having fun with us. It's a fun footnote.

And when he arrives, the crowd is already there. And they say, *'What are you doing here? She's dead, you fool. We tried to warn you—she's dead.'* And Jesus says, *'What difference does that make?'* And he goes to her, and he says *thalassa comb*.

And like all victims, they reach out for grace, and gospel, and God, and love—even if dead. Death has become malleable.

Keep the soil of your soul loose.

Amen.

The peace which surpasses all human understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in Christ's loose love. Amen.