

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42

Sermon March 12th, 2023

Jesus Our Reconciler

Relationships are so important for our wellbeing. They give us meaning and purpose. They help us feel connected and whole. They lift us up when we are feeling down. They bring us joy and happiness. They breathe energy and passion into our lives.

In the beginning of our Bible, in the book of Genesis, we see that we are created to be in relationship with God. We are created to be in relationship with God's non-human creation. We are created to be in relationship with one another.

We are relational creatures who long for friendships, love relationships, parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, community relationships, relationships with animals, the land, the plants, the water. We are relational creatures who long to be in relationship with God. Our creator.

We are relational creatures, and yet, sometimes we find it hard to be in relationship with others. Sometimes we deal with a lot of tension, stress, and conflict in a relationship. Sometimes we struggle with the diversity that exists between one another. Sometimes we can't understand where the person we are in relationship with is coming from or why they act or think in certain ways. Sometimes we can't handle their baggage or struggle. Sometimes we feel disconnected or distant. Sometimes a relationship falls apart.

Turning back to the beginning of the biblical story in the book of Genesis, it doesn't take too long for our relationship with God to become conflicted. It doesn't take too long for there to be conflict within our love relationships. Our sibling relationships. Our parent-child relationships. Our relationships with friends. Our relationships with community. Our relationships with God's non human creation.

Unfortunately, all of us here are probably dealing with wounds from past relationships that fell apart due to conflict, or due to the differences between you, or due to not understanding each other, or due to the baggage or struggle they or you brought into the relationship, or due to feeling disconnected or distant. Whether it be a one-on-one relationship, or a relationship with a community, or a relationship between communities.

In our gospel, Jesus finds himself at a well on Samaritan land. Now the Samaritan's and the Judeans/Galileans had a falling out many years ago. They do not get along

with each other. Kind of like two rival towns where the people from their respective town community spit when they hear the name of the other uttered. “Edmonton” spit.

So, Jesus as a Galilean is in enemy territory here. Now, I don’t know about you, but I am thinking, “there must be a reason for why Jesus is here. Right?”

Well, a Samaritan woman comes to the well at noon to fetch water. Jesus takes a leap of faith and strikes up a conversation with her. At first, she is shocked that a Galilean man would be willing to talk with a Samaritan woman. But after the initial shock she opens up and has a dialogue with Jesus about their different faith traditions.

In the midst of their conversation, Jesus reveals the reason why this woman is coming at the hottest point in the day to fetch water. She has a complicated past where her relationship with her community has fallen apart.

So, Jesus is present in this Samaritan village for two reasons. First, to help this woman reconnect with her community. And he does this. By Jesus’ hospitality and sharing his messianic identity with her, she is then empowered to go back into her community and share this good news. They listen to her, and come out to see Jesus. In this moment, we see that the woman is once again valued by this community.

This leads me to the second reason for Jesus’ presence in this community. Jesus is attempting to reconcile the Samaritans with the Galileans and Judeans. When the Samaritans come out to Jesus many of them believe creating a community of believers where Galileans, Judeans, and Samaritans are one.

In our theological tradition, we believe that Jesus is our Reconciler who reconciles us with our Creator, with one another, and with God’s non-human creation. Stories like the one about Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman shed light on this aspect of who Jesus is. Jesus is our Reconciler.

At the same time, as we reflect on our Exodus story, we see that God’s reconciling work is happening in our world already before the Son of God enters it.

We see that Moses is in conflict with the people of Israel. God has chosen Moses to lead the people through the wilderness, but they are not happy with how Moses is leading them. They are thirsty. Hungry. Longing to be back in Egypt as slaves, because at least they had water to drink and food to eat.

In response to this growing conflict between Moses and the Israelites, God gives the people water to drink. Reconciling the relationship between the Israelites and their leader.

So, God's reconciling work is happening in our communities before the coming of the Son of God. What we see with Jesus, is this reconciling work becomes central to his ministry in the community.

As the church, the body of Christ, we are called and empowered to continue this reconciling work in our community. Whether it's taking part in conversations to help us heal the broken relationship between Catholic and Protestant churches. Or humbly meeting our Muslim neighbours at the dialogue table to help us better understand each other. To help us heal from the past hurts when our religious institutions were driven by power and greed. To help us see all that we share in common, so to, work together to bring justice, peace, and love to the world.

As the church, the body of Christ, we are called and empowered to continue this reconciling work in our community. Whether it is welcoming marginalized communities into the church or helping someone reconnect with an estranged loved one.

As the church, the body of Christ, we are called and empowered to continue this reconciling work in our community. Whether it is being active participants in the truth and reconciliation work being done with the indigenous people of this land. Helping build new partnerships between indigenous and non-indigenous people. Or being active participants in the reconciling work between us and God's non-human creation. Caring for wildlife. Helping with reclamation projects of the land. Protecting the living water, the streams and rivers. As well as the oceans, lakes, ponds, and other water sources.

Jesus is our reconciler who comes into our lives, so that we can experience God's reconciling work. So that we can live out this reconciling work in our communities.

Let us pray, reconciling God, heal our broken relationships. Empower us to be active participants in your reconciling work in the world. **Amen.**

© copyright, 2023, Wallace Bornhuse. All rights reserved.