

“The Story Continues”

“Salty and Loud!”

Matthew 5:13-20 Isaiah 58:1-12

February 9, 2020

Rerun of February 5, 2017

We are now the Wise Ones who
journey as the Star shines wonder and
wisdom to light the way.

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The storyteller’s perspective. Being  
the narrator in your own story, looking  
in on the action able to unhook from  
the drama and so see yourself and  
situations more clearly.

Pulling back to get a different  
perspective is a storyteller’s tool...but  
importantly also a spiritual practice as  
well as a practical life skill.

Each day...able to be a non-anxious  
presence to your own life story!

**Each day a life. Your whole life each  
day.**

#### *A reflection:*

I cried and cried some more.

I told God I was weary of trying.

And, God told me to quit  
trying.

It doesn’t sound like a revelation, but  
it *feels* like a revelation. ...Because I  
got it on a deeper level.

God isn’t saying quit, rather, stop  
trying so hard to do the things that  
aren’t working out so well for you.  
I’m going to remind myself, to do what  
*I can* do...and I’m going to quit trying  
to do the rest. I’m going to focus.

You see, it’s not the doing that’s  
exhausting me, emptying me:  
it’s the trying...trying to do more, be  
other, more than...  
I am.

The trying is exhausting me. The  
doing is exhilarating! (Jan Enise)

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God is inviting each of us:
To live freely and boldly from within a
new, simpler,
non-anxious perspective. To know, to
ponder...

I am light...not heavy, not darkness.
I don’t have to *try* to lighten up or be
the light...
I am light!

If I am, what does this mean for me
as I live my days?

Have I put *myself* under that basket?

Have I given in or given up?

Why do I hesitate? Am I so in the
story that I can no longer remember
the master storyline?
See the bigger picture?

Am I hooked on the drama which I
am, at least in part, making?

Whose judgment is holding me hostage?

Theirs? Yours? My own?

Is my voice trumpeting?

Am I salty enough...or have I lost my flavor?

Let's see, if I were to liken myself to a spice,
what spice would it be? Would it be salt?

Or,

Cinnamon = at home in the way things are

Pepper = ready to shake it up

Sugar = coated

Basil = adding some flavor to the way things seem

Or, *am I Salt?*

Some Loud and Salty Stories from this past week or so:

~Salty: Can we go home yet? ...said by a Guest while finishing up eating at Unity.

~Salty: The more help they try to give me, feels like torture. ...said by a teen.

~Salty: Whose church is this? ...said by someone at a Tippe ministry.

~Salty: I'd go back, but I can't cause nothing's changed and so it's just going to happen again. ...

Said by a victim of domestic abuse.

~Salty: Let's do it ourselves...some Session members regarding leading worship

~Salty: I'll get back to you and I'll get the guys to help. ...a property guy at another church

~Salty: I'll do the dishes, It's not my turn but I want to do something more. ...said by a guest

~Salty: These days, we realize we really need some support to make meaning of things and our son asked to come to church today. ...a young family at Tippe

~Salty: I don't usually come to extra events, but I'm coming to Brave Place because I know I need help to be the change I want to be in the world. ...a Wednesday morning Tippe member.

Other salty stories?

Yet...we can indeed lose our saltiness.

What contributes to a loss of saltiness?

What leads to exhaustion, burn out, apathy, despair, discouragement, fear, loss of faith, mistrust, conflict?

Is it too much aloneness?

Too little community and common good?

Too much focus on things that aren't working and not enough on the things that are?

Information overload?

A contrived need to seek absolute clarity before acting?

A sense that what you do and who you be won't even make a dent?

Is it the kind of self-talk you do? ...belittling yourself and so giving yourself permission to be stuck?

Are you spinning your wheels in ditch doing the same old things over and over again expecting somehow something will change?

Or, maybe you've pulled over for an extended pit stop...pity stop!

In the ancient world salt not only added flavor,
it healed and purified, it preserved foods,
it was used as a form of barter...as good as money in the bank.

And these are the images that would have come to mind in those around Jesus as he spoke on that hill long ago.

And, salt can also destroy...too much of a good thing. Like too much sunshine makes a desert!

Or when used for destructive purposes. Like that snail in the back yard years ago as I watched my kids experiment...once.

So, salt has power for both good and ill.
As do laws and prophecy and Pharisees.

It's how we use the salt...how we use our saltiness
which determines its effect...our effectiveness.

It's a conscious choice...our daily choices and attitudes that salt possibility OR diminish our effect, our efforts.

The world may try to convince us otherwise,
but we are already empowered to bring zest
and healing and illumination to every place we go,
to everything we do.

We are already filled with these qualities.
These are intrinsic to our being, our heartbeat.

But how we choose to live is our own choice...making us salty or diminishing our
salty effect.

And...sometimes what we see and hear and know...
it turns *us* into salt statues.

Drains the life right out of us leaving only salt...remember Lot's wife?

And even then God uses what is happening to us
to salt a new reality...if we will see a different way through, heaven on earth, right
before our eyes.

If we will step back, breathe, see the story from a different vantage point, much
less anxious!

And it is also true, as Jesus himself said many times,
when we engage life in the ways of justice...

it sometimes feels a lot like pouring salt in our wounds...old wounds and new
wounds...SALT...

but then again...even then...especially then...Salt heals. Salt binds. Salt
preserves. Salt enlivens.

So, let's be clear.

Not feeling empowered to keep trying?
You've got God's permission to stop trying!
You've always had it!

And, remember:
not trying does not mean not doing!
It means: Fully Being.

The prophet Isaiah has harsh words for Israel and for us.

Our institutional and religious generosity can't save us – our spiritual practices can't save us – **if** we immunize ourselves to the cries of the poor and the pain of creation and go quiet or lose our saltiness.

Enlightenment without compassion is destructive to our souls and the lives of others.

God invites hands on compassion!

We heard in that master story, and we hear today
the people yelling at God saying,

“We are going to Temple, we are fasting and celebrating the holy days, why don't
you listen to us?”

To which the Holy One responds,
“Spirituality is both/and...not either/or.

You need to be both heavenly minded
and earthly engaged.

Prayers must be joined with protest.
Fasting must be complemented by fairness.
Otherwise, your spiritual practices and institutional support are in vain.”

Authentic, holistic faith comes from
world loyalty not party loyalty, from
caring for the vulnerable, and insuring that every child has a home and every
parent an income.

God's guidance comes through the voices of the vulnerable, not in isolation from
them.

Peace, as Alfred North Whitehead notes,
comes from an expansion of self-interest to include
the well-being of others, the identification
of our self with the Self of the Universe,
our good with the good of creation. January 27, 2017 by Bruce Epperly

Life isn't fair (that's not the promise of faith!) and faith doesn't really make sense.

It can't be explained.
You get it or you don't,
in a flash
you do or you won't!

Jesus doesn't try to explain it.
He simply says what is and who we are!

So...trying? Exhausted?

The antidote for exhaustion is whole-heartedness...living what you do with your whole heart,
the whole of your life's story.

The antidote for despair is action. Isn't it ironic? That the way to get energy is to do something...wisely choosing just 1 thing to do!

The more you do your "inner-being",
the more energy you have ...

So again, tired out?

What are you trying to do...instead of being who you be?

Light creates light.
Salt...enlivens!

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I'm going to remind myself, to do what *I can* do...and I'm going to quit trying to do the rest. Focus.

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emptying me:

it's the trying...trying to be other, more than...I am.

The trying is exhausting me. The doing is exhilarating!

With the Master Story of our faith to guide us,
let us celebrate our God who offers a new way to live,
a new perspective...
the storyteller's perspective...
to guide us in wonder and wisdom.
So all of us Lack-Nothing Lives!

Let us tell ourselves a new story and let's help each other live this newness side by side!

Star of Wonder, Star of Wisdom shines upon us!

You know about salt, right?
Betty taught us many years ago...

~Now in olden days, if you were important enough to be seated above the salt cellar you were considered to be **worth your _____**. [repeat or Right!]

~And if you sat below the salt, you weren't considered to be **worth a lick of _____**, but if you are good, worthy, you are a diamond in the rough and might be called **the _____ of the earth**.

~Since in early times, the only eating utensils were knives, when insults at the dinner table ended with fighting, **_____ was rubbed into your wounds**.

~Sailors or **old _____s** used language that was **_____y** to tell stories which you always took **with a grain of _____**.

~Victorian ladies always carried **smelling _____**. And if the Congress doesn't "fix" Social Security, we're all going to really have to sweat to **_____ away enough money for retirement**.

The salient point is that when we use language of wit, humor, life and vigor, it and we are considered to be **_____y**. [aside] And, when it rains it pours.

...Thanks Betty Salamun of Dance Circus for this salty treat of words!