

"Turbulence...Along The Way"

"What Truth Are You Willing To See?"

The Gospel of Truth 9:7-9, 16: 1, 2, 6,
7b, 10; John 9:1-41

March 22, 2020 Fourth Week of Lent

Invitation to the theme:

The background for our Lenten journey is the reality that turbulence happens, hard times knock on our front door.

As we have the courage to turn toward that turbulence, we are invited to go deep and look beneath its surface commotion

to see what truth might be revealed through it...

one that we might not have had
the courage to see or face otherwise.

Go beneath the surface of things to discover truth.

Remember: the subject's not the issue?

In going deeper to see the truth, we set up for ourselves that do-over and a way through the situation that we might not have been able to discern otherwise.

This truth freeing up new choices is often called God's "judgement".

Me as an example:

So turbulence this week...remembering not all turbulence is "negative."

This week...turbulence at every door. Closures, needs, how to be church without gatherings, impact on our literacy and homeless ministries...on those we serve and those doing the serving.

At first, the truth popped up as stomach unrest and then lower energy, some challenge staying asleep. I knew my body was letting me know the stress was taking a toll...and I thank it! The truth is...I am still me, my work just as vital, and...I am not God! It is not mine to figure it all out, in advance, and then act in some miraculous way. What a relief. Truth is that I am to do what I can, be smart about staying well, go for walks or ride my stationary bike...and watch for opportunities to help that may come in unexpected ways.

If I hadn't gone beneath the surface of the turbulence, with my body's help, I would still be in a high stress overload. But now I know...more deeply...we are one.

Thank God for Turbulence. Truth there is no way to ignore.

Prompting:

Hear it again...“The (adult) Child (of God) spoke new things while speaking what is in the Father’s heart, and brought out the faultless Word. The Child gave them thought and understanding, compassion and salvation, and the spirit of power in the Father’s boundlessness and sweetness. The Child became a “way” for those who strayed, and knowledge for those who were ignorant, discovery for those searching, and strength for those who were shaken, purity for those who were defiled.”

A miracle!

And Jesus, wisdom teacher...rabbi, recognized that miracles alone do nothing to convince people that God is serious about caring for us.

The only people who will believe are those who will believe...who have eyes to see, will go beneath the surface of things, just under the turbulence to see new truth there's no way to ignore.

Perhaps it's only when we see/appreciate the whole of Jesus' intention in being with us...and how he embraced parables and mythology in teaching us a new way to be human beings, that we “see” his “miracles”

and the ones before our very eyes.

And, often, miracles call us to move through our grief and fear in order to be present to the turbulence in truth-telling ways, always held within Holy protection.

In John’s telling, in your eyes, what is the “miracle” that takes place in today’s wisdom teaching?

Is the miracle
that the man’s sight is restored,
 that he defies the legalism of the temple,
that the man knows to simply state truths and not defend himself or Jesus?

What is the miracle you see?

Have you ever wondered what it is God sees as miracle?
Does God have eyes? Does love see deeply what is?
For me, through compassionate love, God...sees!
And this is often not what the world sees.

And making it harder for us to see...is our grief for hopes not fulfilled, disappointment in others,
betrayals and abandonments,
life’s turbulence.

Our fear and grief can turn us inward in ways we then don't...won't...see at all.

Grief and fear that blind us...perhaps they exist for really good reasons...and still...God invites us to go deeper...together, to move forward in life.

It's a choice we make to see possibility, truth beneath the turbulence...or not. Right through our fear and grief.

Holiness provides a way to make it through, if we're listening for God's truth and not our own version of the truth... repeating in our minds, our own sad stories.

Our self-talk and how we tell ourselves and others the stories about events in our lives matter.

Do we see the truth of things...or are we creating drama to avoid the truth of things and our own accountability?

If we retell the story to ourselves from a different vantage point,
in a sighted way, we release a new energy and understanding around that story.
We open possibility for other meanings.

And here's some truth:

The anxiety of others, is not your anxiety.

The choices of others, are theirs and don't reflect on you.

So...where is truth in your day?

Did she snub me *or* did she simply not see me?

Did they leave because I entered the room, *or* were they already leaving as I entered?

I was a disappointment to my parents *or* my parents don't see my true potential and gifts.

They don't like me *or* they don't understand me.

Get the idea? See how you shape the truth beneath the turbulence...and powerfully so!

*What's the truth of the matter...
what are its potential gifts that feel like good news?*

Light through the window. Past travails now informing new choices. Where is truth; where is peace?

Truth is so much more easily seen when we stop making assumptions about others which are often faulty.

SO...are you seeing “truth” or making an assumption?

...is he lying? Or, is he telling it from his perspective and biases?

...is she cheating? Or, is she taking advantage of all the resources available to her?

....are they wrong? Or, are we just jealous of them?

We make assumptions based on things we do not know and have not seen...and then often act on them. Blindly.

Sometimes we make assumptions based on our need to control situations, maintain our power or pride within a situation. Sometimes we do so because of our fear and grief.

We make assumptions so we don’t have to see ourselves in situations, see the truth the turbulence tries to reveal.

Sometimes we even make assumptions from a place of nostalgia within us that wants to hang on to the way things were...or the way we want to remember them.

Jesus invites us **not** to make assumptions as they are often based on our own neediness. Jesus invites us

not to assume, to *blame* our parents/others/even ourselves for the turbulence, for our blindness!

...but rather face our blindness and look to the deeper truths,
often revealed in the constantly eye-opening love of God
in all the events of our daily lives,

both the good and challenging ones...
See the miracles within ordinary days.

The spiritual life is:

**prayerfully living
within the vulnerabilities of our own humanity
as we allow ourselves to be slowly guided
into God’s vantage point**

...God’s truth for us and the world.

It is a process, not a cure.

It is about living honestly within the confines

**of not yet seeing clearly...yet devoted
to living openly and honestly!**

But how can you live without making assumptions?

Maybe the better question is:

**Knowing we all make assumptions, are we willing to see the bigger picture, God's
vantage point,
before we act? We're in such a rush to act!**

There's a bit of paradox in us:

**We often feel desperate to know all the facts and possibilities before a decision is made,
before a leap of faith or trust is taken, a commitment chosen.**

**Yet, we also often judge quickly and easily without the facts...without truly
knowing...based on our assumptions.**

**We find ourselves living at both extremes,
blindly living either way.**

I have known many who are sad to the point of depression because they are blinded by the need to know everything or heal completely
before they'll do anything.

They dread entering relationships or marriage or a new vocational choice they are offered

*because they are holding out for something better or clearer...gee, maybe the grass
will be greener!*

**Their need for clarity, then, is ironically
a desperate form of blindness.**

Clarity of vision is so prized;

**yet in the spiritual life it is often a defensive posturing which works
towards excluding
God's care and the wisdom of others.**

The spiritual life is not a spectator sport waiting for better odds.

It's a process of participating and seeing *ourselves* from new vantage points.

If we live defending ourselves and refusing to face ourselves or the truth the turbulence “begs” us not to ignore,

then we live in illusion and our experience of God's love
will be elusive or vicarious at best.

**People growing in the spiritual life
welcome
without irritation
the mysteries of not knowing,
not seeing fully yet,
*and live and walk and trust nonetheless.***

The Jewish leaders who confront the man born blind are seeking clarity for their own security and protection denying the truth before their very eyes.

Jesus insists *they* relinquish their strict legalism...
a standard of what is right based on laws
instead of the truth before their very eyes.

Like them, is *your* seeking clarity really a stall method for acting, your resistance to changing your understandings?

**Jesus invites them to enter into the insecurity,
the paradoxes, which are at the heart
of the true religious spirit.**

Here at Tippe, we know about the insecurity that is at the heart of the true religious spirit. It's a good thing.

Thank God we have to live it and do not have the money or power to choose *not to...*
thank God we have to struggle...
it keeps us awake...alongside others,
forces us to keep looking/seeing God's possibilities without any guarantees...
missteps and all...because "this" isn't yet enough
for us or for our God!

The blind man does not want to enter into religious debate. As last week in the Gospel of Truth. He is concerned with himself...his focus is on his truth, not what is rotten. He only knows that once he was blind and now he sees.

**I often say face the faith and not the facts...
but here I would say face the facts of your faith and your past travails
and God's movement in your life.**

Outside of abusive situations...

in the simplest of things, the turbulent things,
we receive the invitation:

Stop being so finicky! So controlling! So legalistic!
So unforgiving! So afraid. So stuck in your grief!

It's truly a miracle when we can accept things
the way they are *and* move on.

The man born blind received the light of faith along with his physical sight, while the Pharisees in their obstinacy lost the opportunity to see and believe.

**In the spiritual life it is important
to have desires, but not demands;**

hopes, but not hardened expectations...

**to be grateful Jesus comes.
The Universal Christ cares enough
to bring you truth that can free you.**

Jesus enters this man's life and calls him out of his usual roles and assumptions, his dependency, into a powerful faith

that sees clearly beyond appearances,
speaks simple truths, judges not.

And he moves his life forward. Will you move forward?

What do YOU see?

Are you willing to see more?

That would be NO minor miracle for any of us!

We are not asked to live as if we are not hurting...
but we are asked:

How are you going to live the truth that is there,
right under the surface of our brokenness, the turbulence!

When turbulence knocks on the door of your life,
glimpse its truths and eventual gifts.

And, hear Jesus' words to you:
Peace. Be still.