

“Resist and Begin Again...A Blessed New Normal”

*“All You Can Control Is Your Attitude...
And That’s Everything!”*

1 Peter 3:13-22; John 4:15-21
May 17, 2020
Sixth Week of Eastertide

Ok, I am wondering about that new normal...that blessed new normal we are all saying we want in the world. But are we really willing to do things any differently in order to make that happen?

If you haven’t already begun to think and do things differently, what makes you think you will...what would it take to begin your new blessed normal...now?

...in advocating for low income workers, spending money differently, supporting those without resources differently, to address the racial disparity in how this virus is affecting us as a nation?

But, I get it!

With our level of anxiety this high, it’s all a bit overwhelming. A new attitude calls out to us...*but it feels more yells at us!* There are very real losses in our lives!

It feels like we’re orphaned...set adrift...a part more than together perhaps. Very different boats in this one storm.

Even so, I believe we can all head toward the same safe horizon taking different routes...supporting different needs ...but setting sail...now

giving of our selves, our attitudes, and our money!

Sarah and Neil set sail toward that horizon the morning after Hungry Hearts launched. So did Tom and Jan and Judy and ? ...seeking that new normal, blessed horizon.

And here’s the thing that can help us. We are not abandoned or set adrift. We are adopted.

Adopted into the new humanity. We are wanted, Holiness comes for us and takes us home. We are taking tiny baby steps growing up again as new human beings.

The Spirit of Truth empowers and our spirits launch!

Question is: will we let ourselves be adopted...adapted!

Will we stop ignoring the truth? Live differently?

(This is what I think brought me to tears in sharing last Sunday...so deeply grateful beyond words to be able to really help...and wondering how many of us will set sail.)

It’s not easy to resist our usual ways, be adopted to a new humanity, adapt...to truths that no longer can be ignored.

It’s intimidating out there. We need some cover...some safety, some support to be able to do things differently.

So, here’s some cover for us: there’s safety in numbers. Like in Peter, together we weather the storm through joining in a wave of compassion.

We will not fear what they fear. The unknowns won't stop us from trying. We aren't afraid of failing and trying again.

We save our souls in doing "good"...as Peter says.

The Spirit of Truth is up to some mischief in you, advocating for you in you...setting sail with you toward a new normal.

It takes more effort to ignore and resist
than it does to set!

Jesus comes to bring us peace...exactly in times such as this.

He wants us to know peace...of mind.

Your need to be at peace with the world and at peace with yourself so you can respond...make newly life giving choices as everyone else struggles making the usual choices.

Instead of the devil made me do it...say: God makes me do it!

Your inner peace is your cover and a touchstone
to know what to do.

It's that Oneness Jesus speaks of...Me in God, God in me, you in Me, you in God...I in
you.

Be "one" with yourself, others, God.

It's the Easter invitation:

make conscious choices that do no harm.

Another way to say this:

Take on a new attitude about the choices that are yours to make daily. You may not be able to control what the day brings to you...or throws at you...but you *can* control your attitude. And God and we will help!

All you can control is your attitude!

And, God can help!

After all, when you have faith, love Jesus and (importantly) let Him love you,
when you strive to follow the Holy commandment, it'll shape your attitude
about...everything! If you'll let it!

Love God, love yourself the way God loves you,
and love others the way you love yourself.

The new commandment Jesus invites us to keep.

**If we were about doing this, boy...what a change in attitude...and
patience...that would bring about!**

If we did this, we would feel God, Jesus, the Spirit of Truth with us, no longer feeling

orphaned, now able to adapt, and be at home no matter where we are.

Jesus says, my Father and I will make our home with you.

Jesus says I will never leave you an orphan...no matter what! With us always, no matter what. Begin where you are.

**Will you let this reality touch your attitude?
Are you willing to now live a new blessed normal?**

There are those among us that even though they struggle a lot in their lives, they always seem to have this central core of peace and an attitude of gentle courage that calms and uplifts them.

Their eye seems to be on the horizon no matter where they start their journey or how the winds blow. And, it shows.

Their attitude is loving kindness and this is the lens through which they see the world. They see and embrace their new normal!

They don't resist the irresistible!

They do resist what is often culturally predictable...that is:

many will act out of desperation because of their isolation...
no sense of belonging to humanity...a community doing good.

And those desperate want us (are desperate for us) to conform to their assumptions and attitudes as a way of justifying their fear, no matter what the cost to our souls.

They don't know God even though God knows them and wants them to come home.

Desperate, they want us to fit in, shape up, and often shut up. To get in step, give over our ability to think for ourselves, and so glob together. To paddle nowhere or go in circles never moving forward. Wow!

It takes a lot of courage and energy not to be manipulated by others or by challenging situations...

to resist what we deeply know isn't right for us, doesn't it?

Resist.

Jesus invites us to embrace our own personal power and respond to the new commandment.

Our individual response to loving God, ourselves, and our neighbors will be unique to each one of us...different boats.

We each have a unique spiritual fingerprint. But it is hand in hand that we move forward. Necessarily so.

We need a variety of adaptations, boats.

We are to develop our own attitude about life, given our faith. We are to think!

With the mind of Christ...with the wisdom of the Spirit of Truth which can no longer be ignored,

we are each to resist in our own unique way
and live a new blessed normal, be a new humanity.

How life would be different if we had the mind and attitude of Christ and let that attitude empower us?

With the attitude of Christ, the world looks different and the choices we can make doable. We start out anew...starting right where we are, each of us with a “can do” attitude uniquely our own...

we are not orphaned, not out here all alone.

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I think Jesus understands how we are feeling adrift right now. He is sensitive to the feeling of being orphaned and at risk.

He encourages us not to give in to the way it seems.

Says the best is yet to come as we together create...

heaven on earth as we take on a new attitude, a holy  
consciousness about the power of our choices.

Not only that, Christ goes back to the beginning of time to bring everyone forward in grace...with a new attitude!

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We each know something of being orphaned...by your family, work, friends, life. It's real.

But so is the faith.

So is the power of resisting, living what is just.

There are times when we will feel orphaned.

When life and others seem to leave us beached high and dry...and still we are to be new humans beings creating a blessed new normal!

Such a time, times such as these, can be the perfect time
to put on a new attitude
that makes the blessed new normal really real.
Do something!

You cannot change the past or control the future.

**All you can really ever control is your attitude
in this moment!**

You are powerful...right now...in the moment.

You can take on the attitude of being loved and so love yourself...and others! You can. We can. Will you?

~What was the last bold choice you made because of the nudge and guidance of the Spirit of Truth?

~What resistance did you meet as you began to act differently? Other would tempt you to take a short cut or go on a different journey.

~How were you able to resist giving in even when it meant you might be judged or isolated or sabotaged if you moved ahead?

It had something to do with your attitude based in loving yourself and others, your embracing your new humanity!

I'm really asking you to think of a time you....

*Spoke up about class disparity?

*Sat next to a child who needed a friend or a tutor or a hug?

*Wrote a letter to a congress person?

*Stepped away from gossip at work?

*Said no to an off color joke?

*Recommitted yourself to your partner?

*Put down the cigarette or the drink?

*Began a counseling relationship to understand yourself better?

*Defied the threat of economic doom and doubled your giving?

*Said yes to joining/re-joining Tippe when the world would make church-going a joke...re-joining not because it does Tippe good because it does you good?

Anxiety and fear can make us ineffective
and block our path to God.

Find your Christ Power attitude.

Relax. You are not alone. Breathe.

Together, we'll make it through our anxiety, our fear.

Set sail toward a blessed new normal. Set sail!

Ok. Scratch all that.

There once was a long time member of a church who had dropped away from attending.

You remember him/her...been there/done that, for them...too many new faces or not enough new faces,
high expectations all around...felt they knew better than anyone else...or simply felt tired out, burnt out.

Seemed to her/him he'd be better off alone...better "that"
than acting out...easier than figuring it out, right?
And so he just stopped coming.

One winter's day the pastor of his church decided to make the man a visit. When the pastor entered the man's house, he was invited to sit with him in front of the fire... which was slowly on its way out.

No one spoke.

The Pastor got up to stir the fire, and set one ember/coal aside as the rest slowly began to dim.

You see, the pastor could think of many things to say to cheer him up, encourage him, convince him, try to change his mind...encourage him *to put on a new attitude.*

But then again, as we know...if someone isn't already coming toward you, they can't hear you.

And this man wasn't budging.

Sitting there. In quiet. And the fire goes out.

Sat there some more.

Then the pastor slowly got up and moved that one coal to the center of what seemed a pile of ash.

And...as it began to fire up again, the man said,
"I see what you mean." Shortly thereafter the pastor left.

Guess he didn't want to make an ash of himself.

It just takes 1 burning heart, 1 shift in 1 attitude, 1...and the Spirit of Truth comes on fire burning brightly.

All you have to do is 1 thing: begin.

Face the Easter truth and "start again" with each other...

with broken open - chipped hearts

with a new blessed normal attitude!

We are all one...we all belong.

Easter invites us to breathe and think and start again!

We are the new humanity.

We are that blessed new normal.