

“Turbulence...Along The Way”

“Helping Each Other Into Hope”

Ezekiel: 37:1-14; John 11:17-45; The Gospel of Truth 20:1-2, 6-8, 13-14, 18

July 12, 2020

Rerun of March 29, 2020

Fifth 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...Dick. Truth is: God is already there. With God, Dick and Gail can receive what they need most...far beyond a visit from me...exquisite peace and wholeness...the courage to live on together beyond this threshold time. I can coach on the phone, surround them with the light and love of my prayer with a presence that far supersedes the physical.

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

Prompting:

Ahh the power of the spoken word... God to the bones, Jesus to Lazarus, the Spirit to you!

You know the song? 'dem bones...'dem bones...'dem dry bones!

Yes, we too need to reconstruct ourselves in the valleys of our lives...midst the turbulence we are personally experiencing in terms of fear and isolation and sadness that dry us up.

There is truth revealed in these barren spots in our lives,

...and we can rise again!

You have a choice:
wallow in the pit,

in the valley, play dead

....or rise up!

Would you rise up...to show you're alive and breathing...*rise up even out of your seats let alone out of the valley?! What will it take to get a rise out of you?*

~We each have a story to tell (of just these past 2 weeks alone let the whole of our lives)...
a story full of valleys *and* hilltops.

I do...I can look back and see where God has been faithful to me, filled my life with new
breathe, met me in the valley...a deeper truth right beneath the turbulence of this past week and
the many dry bones times of my life!

We've named some of those empowering truths these last few weeks together bringing to mind
other times when truth shone through hard times.

So when I'm wallowing in my miseries again, I have this realization there is a deeper truth...and
this real hope.

Because I have a history, I know God is here.

And, I may not be, we are not all where...we want to be.

Surely, it's not where Martha and Mary want to be...when Jesus says go to the tomb, roll back
the stone of the grave.

Jesus challenges them to go where they do not want to go,
to open up the most painful part of their life to him...
the loss of their brother!

And like you, this is no where they want to go,
want to be!

This is not suppose to be! This doesn't seem hopeful!

Martha, bless her heart, says what we all know to be true but have been led to believe we should
not say at all...let alone to Jesus: *There's a stench!*

We'd say: This stinks! Life stinks! This isn't fair!

...What are the stinking truths of our lives/your life (just this week) that you might find hard to
say out loud...to anyone, to yourself, to your God?

What stinks? Something stinks.

Sometimes life stinks and we are in the depths of the pit, in the valley of bones, in the tomb
closed by a large stone...

**and Jesus stands with us in that place, that turbulence...stands with us in the pit, in the
valley...**

**in front of the tomb in which we have placed
what's dead in us,
in which we are trying to seal up what's dead in us
as if it didn't happen,**

and so we shut out of our lives the support of our God and the possibility things can be different.

Close ourselves off from those around us
who are our hope!

**Close them out...by not answering the phone, the email.
By not showing up...on Zoom or listening
to podcast Tippe Talk.**

Jesus stands with us in the most painful of places
and two things are true there:

~He weeps with us (cause this is not how things ought to be) and
~He brings new life into that very place. Truth will do that!
Jesus calls out in a loud voice...

Comes out! Come out!
Jesus says “Roll back the stone!”

Martha and Mary do the risky thing. They act on faith, not on what they fear or they *think* they know...

rather they *risk* a new truth, risk acting in hope.

And, together, like the call to those in the pit, like all those boney souls rising together...they help each other.

Against common sense and their better judgment,

**they don't keep the thing that stinks in life buried
or sealed shut....it needs the light of day! Secrets kill!**

**They know their ultimate need can only be met
by rolling back the stone...confronting their fear...and smelling the stench, letting life out.**

Sometimes we don't know what we need.
Sometimes we don't ask for what we need.

Too often we hold things in, shut people out,
refuse to let pain show.

AS it says in the Gospel of Truth, we don't stretch toward that which is stretching toward us.
“Hope” is stretching toward us!

Instead, we often hide our need. We don't allow ourselves to help meet each other's needs. We isolate instead of congregate...even virtually!

It's killing us, drying us up, dry bones!

We could speak up, cry out! Ask for what we need!

Someone would help!

**You see, in that pungent place,
in *that* very place...maybe only to that place,
the fragrant truth of hope returns.**

God is not afraid to wander through the elephant graveyards that fill each of our lives.
God's not afraid of the smelly places in our lives.

Maybe we shouldn't be afraid either...afraid to enter such places in our lives and in the lives of others.

Even if you master your fear, you won't go *anywhere* without the help and support of others who believe in our God in you.

No one goes anywhere without help...without others to unbind them. We have to unbind each other.

The resurrection happens, new life comes to us but first we have to walk the talk, you have to come out and be unbound.

We have to do this for and with each other...
take those grave clothes off each other.

Give each other a break...a chance...
to be new people!

No grudges, no judgments, no strings attached!

It's not even Easter yet...but we've already been given the hope we need...it's just that we are still wrapped and bound in those strips of old cloth...

old ways of thinking and doing...as if there were no hope.

What appeared dead in us has been raised, but we can't walk around until we allow ourselves to experience the miracle of truth's impact and create some movement in our own lives.

We all need...a little help from our friends to be able to see the truth the turbulence in our life makes impossible to ignore...freeing us to choose differently.

Hear Jesus say: "Untie him/her and let her/him go."

Hear Jesus say to Martha...to you: Believe and see.

...We have everything in front of us.
You have *been* called out. You are being unbound.

...don't hesitate...even when

~you are afraid of the present, let alone the future.

~you are more comfortable with past misery than the prospect of future joy.

~ even when you look back at what is broken, devastated, depressing, death dealing...dem Dry bones...the

Over eating, over thinking, over assuming, over sleeping, over medicating,
over reacting, ...*over time...dry bones!*
...A job that sucks dry your hope, a marriage that is barren of love, a terminal illness, a partner with dementia, even the losses of aging and you hesitate and begin to wonder:

How can anything live on the other side
of this experience?

That's exactly when you are to remember the wisdom:

Get up out of your seat,
Get off the coach,
get up your nerve!

Get out of your rut, your pit, that graveyard you're living! Stand up, climb out, move out!
The antidote for despair is action!!

This is the discovery of the light of truth (coming that window)...the truth there is no way to ignore!

We've been discovering turbulent truths this Lent:

Know the story, use the story, be the story's power!

Ask questions...of the person who can answer them.

Ask yourself what is really life giving and look to the unconventional sources God provides for our lives today...

Make all assumptions positive, no blaming! and open your eyes to possibility!

Together, all things are possible for those who believe...

when we are self-aware and start from the truth of where we are...not trying to be other than we are.

With God, we can make something from what appears to be nothing!

Truth is hope!

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:
Be still. Peace. Be still.