

Day 2

“Invited”

Inspirations of Brene Brown, thingsilearnt
(wordpress.com), Dr. Mulkar
Exodus 32:1-14; Philippians 4:1-9;
Matthew 22:1-14
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Theme:

Within our shared worshipful times together at Tippe over many years, we have often spoken about the power of the stories we tell ourselves to be either life giving or life stopping.

Tell the story (of your day, a part of your life) to yourself in a different way, with a different intent or focus, you change how it shapes the meanings you make. Different narrative, different meaning.

Our lives have many stories running through them concurrently: daily lives and long-term intentions, our projects and goals, relationships with different people.

And each story has a process or a storyline: a beginning, a middle, and an end. So, three acts: a Day One, Day Two, Day Three.

Day 1 is the start...the “what?” and a deep realization, with deep emotions or lack of, a reckoning, of sorts, with the way things really are.

Day 2 is the struggle...how to respond/move forward. It asks of us our vulnerability to honestly acknowledge what is happening, curious about new

questions and learnings. Wrestling with and ruminating on ideas and strategies, recognizing misunderstandings, faulty assumptions, projections...and owning them as a way of freeing yourself to new insights. We call this courage!

Day 3 is the resolution...the new way, a new and maybe unexpected ending that makes much meaning...brings meaning to life. It creates a little revolution in your life...as you rally, recover, and reach out.

And, Day 2 is always the hardest.

The “what to do now” is hard and often leaves you feeling exposed, perhaps overwhelmed...and often tired!

It’s also ‘the point of no return’ - a term borrowed from aviation. You’re too far to turn back, but not yet far enough...to see the light, a new ending to your story, and your struggle.

Day 2 is a scary place at times. You just don’t know what will come next but you do know...it is coming (you can’t turn back...the clock) and you have a say in what will come next. The way you tell yourself this story matters!

Thing is: **You can’t skip day 2!**

Day 2 is the non-negotiable part of the process - when things are raw, and real, emotions are high. This is when the struggle seems too real and too large. Life is a rumble. Sound familiar? The gut-wrenching, never-ending feeling of everything going wrong is Day 2.

But the only way to Day 3 is through Day 2. Because...
you cannot resolve the challenge till you
deeply FEEL the need to resolve it –
REALLY FEEL THE NEED for it to be different
in your bones, unleashing your true potential.

(Like angst of running up against a deadline you've avoided through procrastination
can prompt your best work ...pushing you to stretch. Or, how often someone struggling
in addiction must hit the bottom before they come back up.
Like when you're backed up against a wall.)

It takes courage to stay in Day 2.
Courage to be vulnerable in exploring the situation and options.
You have to choose courage over comfort (which may be cozy at first but sits you on the
couch as an on-looker in your own life story as if powerless)

And, no amount of awareness or experience
can give you a free pass from the daunting level of doubt
which is part of the process of Day 2.

But what awareness and experience **will** give you is:

“A little grace. A grace that whispers:

“This is part of the process. Stay the course. You've done this before. I am with you.
Together, we've got this!”

It's messy...and it's normal. It's okay. It's where the magic happens. Mystery unfolds.
Holiness thrives within. So: stay the course.

In this Covid/protest/politic season, most of us have been in Day 1 a while now...and
are being pushed, no return now, into Day 2.

The way you navigate Day 2 will define the possible new outcome and peace of your
story: Day 3.

The way you tell yourself your story, matters.

Introduction to scriptures:

Today's readings move us to reflect not only about the consequences of our own choices
on us, but a corporate aspect as well.

The spirit of a time (Day 1, 2, 3) is an incredibly subtle, yet hugely powerful force.
And it is comprised of the mentality and spirit of all individuals together.

Therefore,
the way you look at things is not simply a private matter. Beyond your self-talk,
your outlook actually and concretely affects what goes on.

When you give into healthlessness, you collude with despair and add to it. Your
story, story of the community, world.

When you take back your power and choose to see the possibilities for healing and
transformation and tell yourself that story, your creativity awakens and flows to
become an active force of renewal and encouragement in the world.

In this way, even in your own hidden life, you can become a powerful agent of
transformation in a broken, darkened world.

There is a huge force field that opens when intention focuses and directs itself
toward transformation.

John O'Donohue from to bless the space between us, adapted.

We, like our God, can grow and change and live dynamically. Our self-talk and the way
we tell ourselves the narrative of the Day plays a key role in how our lives live out.

Prompting:

In Exodus, we revert back; in Philippians we argue, in Matthew, we come to the
moment ill prepared.

Exodus wisdom:

God changed God's mind! And, it's not the only story of God changing or Jesus
changing his mind.

Which must mean that an infallible, omnipotent God does not mean God doesn't grow
and learn.

Really...is it that God makes mistakes or is it that God uses everything for good even
when God's heart is initially assaulted and broken? *Oh that we were more like God!*

Most of us get as far as the temper tantrum God had, and then we get stiffed neck.
Day 1.

But God went on to listen to the voice of one with whom he was in relationship and
this changed the quality of God's own heart...God listens.

And Moses prompts God to remember past experience and that “he’d” been here before. One person moved God and so a whole nation to a different Day 3.

God moved out of God’s anger and disappointment and blame...and into curiosity and possibility.

As Josh said in Monday worship: “God gives a damn!”

And isn’t it interesting...Moses has been *so there* for the people, and one time he lingers longer on the mountain top and it’s like...

What have you done for me lately?

Don’t show up when we need you with what we want from you, and we’re going to move into self-doubt and neediness and find a different leader.

We’re so co-dependent on you, that if you don’t meet our every need in the moment, we will slip back into old familiar patterns even if they will lead us nowhere good.

We will become...like a glob, a mob.

Gee, how often our neediness pushes us to revert back to old patterns in our families, churches and in the world of politics.

Not much patience and not much confidence in our own abilities.

A tentative, impatient faith...not reckoning with the way things really are or what might come next.

Philippians wisdom:

So, we argue. And it gets us nowhere.

Question is: How do we break this cycle?

How do we be in the moment differently?

What kind of self-talk or narrative would help us loosen our stiff necks...so we could argue differently?

Our focus matters!

Two were arguing and the guidance offered is focus...

Focus on “these” things: what is true, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent...anything worthy of praise.

Think on these things.

How might you argue differently if your focus was on kindness, gentleness, what is already fair and good,

not worrying about the outcome and what is to come.

What if your focus is honoring what is right, guarding your heart with peace *instead* of walls?

How might it go differently?

Are you willing to move from
being “right” to “getting it right”?

If we practice the art of arguing 1 on 1,
the community grows through our example and energy.

Paul invites everyone in the church to get involved in reconciliation...because the stakes are high!

It’s personal and it’s corporate.

This takes us back to my opening about the
“spirit of a time”.

Yeah...haven’t you seen little arguments in a church (or family or at work) get blown out of proportion and suddenly nothing is more important than the argument.

And all that matters to the antagonist, regardless of what it does to those involved, is to win, be right!

A whole church, or family, or nation, can go down the tubes!

Where does your mind go when you’re upset with someone?

Do you start with the positive and leave assumptions, blame and shame behind? Move into Day 2?

Matthew wisdom:

The kingdom of heaven is like a wedding banquet?

The first invitation went out to the folk who coulda, woulda, shoulda get it (the priests, scribes, we church people) ...but they made light of the invitation like they couldn't be bothered at the moment.....

It sure is easy to sleep in on a Sunday, forget to send in the offering, look the other way when a hand is needed.

At work, leave by a different door.

At home, go to bed early or sit in front of the TV for hours.

Do we act as if we can't be bothered?

Taking things lightly instead of seeing the offer at hand and the consequences of our choices.

Those first invited become stiff necked (hard hearted, taking what they have for granted, thinking the feast will be there for them when they want it, on demand).

They kill the messenger who came to ask them to think again...to change their mind?
Do we do that?

Some, form a mob against the messengers.

Some, went to work to avoid the situation completely.

As if looking the other way is a good defense
when a choice needs to be made!

So then, the "good and bad" were invited in right off the street...and all but one came in a wedding garment...a symbol of your joy in coming, your gratitude in just being there...

there is an expectation in being invited and in coming...

a preparation of self to be present...

a prepared heart of appreciation and gratitude and partying!

And it's not that few are chosen by God...all are invited and only a few chose to really come!

We self-select. Called free will.

You have to show up and how you come matters!
It speaks to the quality of your heart.

Will we join the party? Join our spirit with those present?

Will our group spirit be life giving or life stopping?

Will you cloth yourself in a wedding robe of possibility?

Will you succumb to mob mentality or stand apart
into group spirituality?

Will we glob together comforting ourselves in faulty assumptions, blaming others for
the way things are...
taking things...important things...lightly?

So...wisdom for today:

The calm thinking of Moses, 1 person, changes God's mind and everyone's Day 3.

There is an art to arguing that is life giving which can bring an unexpected
result...and it's contagious, affecting those who are within ear shod.

If we can be aware when we glob or find ourselves in a mob mentality, then we can
chose differently and change the narrative of our days.

And something is expected.

And, something is offered...a new Day 3.

Do you see yourself in one of these stories? All of them?

~What is the story you are right now telling yourself about your situation...emotions
and all? Self-Talk counts!

~What in that story are you willing to own as your projections or judgements?

~Will you move your story from Day 1...reckoning with your feelings and engaging your
curiosity about what can come?

~Will you move your story to Day 2? And stay there with courage and vulnerability to
give peace and Day 3 a chance?

God knows how hard it is to be human being
and invites us...

not to be right but to get it right!

We are invited into Day 2 and risk the consequences
rather than waste time trying to find what is the impossible:
a solution that has no consequences!

**I can change my mind about myself.
I can change my life
and what it means to be a new being, human.**

Will you open the storyline...be curious, vulnerable, courageous? Are you willing to
look at things differently?

When you change the way you look at things,
the things you look at...change!
Just like that: 1, 2, 3.