

Theme: We are at a threshold...a threshold time.

Right now, unlike any other time in our lifetimes, we have an opportunity to move forward differently...not to resume or assume but to cross over to a new way of being. John O'Donohue says it this way:

“At any time you can ask yourself: At which threshold am I now standing?  
At this time in my life, what am I leaving? Where am I about to enter?  
What is preventing me from crossing my next threshold?  
What gift would enable me to do it?

A threshold is not a simple boundary; it is a frontier that divides two different territories, rhythms, and atmospheres.  
Indeed, it is a lovely testimony to the fullness and integrity of an experience or a stage of life that it intensifies toward the end  
into a real frontier that cannot be crossed  
without the heart being passionately engaged and woken up.

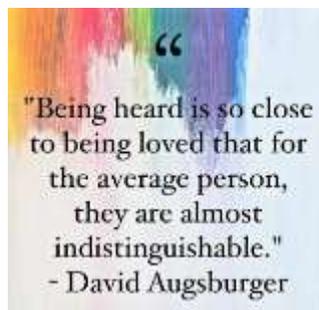
At this threshold a great complexity of emotion comes alive: confusion, fear, excitement, sadness, hope. What is your story? Not all parts of the story come gift wrapped, but all parts of the story hold wisdom for you to move forward.

It is wise in your own life to be able to recognize and acknowledge the key thresholds:  
to take your time;  
to feel all the varieties of presence that accrue there;  
to listen inward with complete attention until you hear the inner voice calling you forward.

The time has come to cross.”

When you begin to gain insight honoring from where you have come, honoring what has worked well already, and awakening to what is needed now....  
you begin to get glimpses of what can be. You see the threshold.

And often what helps us move forward, is the sense of being heard, valued, loved.



We hear each other into life.

This is a threshold time and this is a sanctuary space in which we offer belonging to each other, hear each other, Holy love each other and appreciate each other's wisdom. Here, you can try on being that new human being Jesus invites us to become...perhaps fail at first, but then try again.

Grace invites us to move forward into this threshold moment

We cross the threshold as we embrace the fullness of our life stories and all the wisdom they hold. And we find, so often, hope comes from the very place the hurt comes.

*Music video.*

*We're At A Threshold!*

*"Salty Words For This Time!"*

James 5: 13-16, 19; Mark 9: 38-50  
September 26, 2021

Before Mark:

The images Jesus uses are so not like Him, so severe, it must be this is really important especially coming on the heels

of the disciples avoiding the issue and so arguing about who is the greatest, their pettiness about where power should reside...with them!

Vs. the power that comes in being connected to positive power in all its various forms and origins.

Sin: Failings, missing the mark

Hell: Separation

Salt: Courage...ability to shake it up and out

Before James:

What is prayer? Not trying to convince God to do something but rather a deep sharing that invites me to be...newly able.

Prayer: When I pray for someone else, I ask God that I might see the other as God does. See myself as God sees me through a lens of love and possibility.

## **Prompting:**

Jesus came for times such as these...so we wouldn't waste any of our suffering...use the whole of your story. So we may see and approach the threshold of this moment in life giving ways that move us forward.

He comes to places in your life and in our world where fear and dread (you know the difference?) overwhelm us.

(illness, financial distress, broken relationships, isolation,  
so many kinds of suffering)

Places and times that overwhelm *you*  
and make it difficult for you to see

how things could ever be different...or make you want to throw in the towel...

to the point that you sometimes have not only given up...

but given over your personal power to more destructive energies...you've withdrawn or gone it alone.

And then you, often unconsciously,  
yet sometimes consciously,

place stumbling blocks in the ways of little ones  
(children and those most vulnerable,  
what's most vulnerable in us).

Stumbling blocks: giving in to the usual ways, the mindless hopelessness of the world...often THE routine

what and how you usually do what you do and don't do...  
not engaging the moment and without thinking.

As we succumb to the seductive, destructive,  
defensive ways of the world...

giving up on ourselves and the world.

In times such as these,

we often give in to the malaise of life  
and give over our power.

We let "the way things seem" become to us the way things really are. But rarely are things the way they seem!

In times such as these,

we don't look to see that the everyday choices, often shaped by emotion and which can overwhelm...we fail to see the choices we make do have the power to make a difference in our lives and in God's world.

That each moment is a threshold moment of possibilities.

So let me ask you...this past year, right now:

What emotion do you feel most often...fear, anger, shame, confusion, sadness, discouragement, hope?

What has helped you move through these feelings in the past? Has worked well for you to frame a different choice for what can come next? Take minute here.

And Jesus says...beware...if you give up on yourself and those around you...it *does* harm...it hurts you! And others.

Better you were thrown into the sea  
than live your life like this.

If you choose to live your life as if there are no other choices or your choices don't really have impact,

that viewpoint will kill you off for sure...

kill your life essence/your spirit  
in even more devastating way than losing your life.

Worse than death is living without integrity...

living in fear and dread,  
living in abusive relationships...

sabotaging others, turning a blind eye,  
throwing your hands up in disgust  
over reacting,  
getting even.

Worse than death is living without integrity...

over spending/hoarding and under spending,  
living in anger and projecting that onto everyone around you without an inward look.

Worse than death...living without the grace of  
do-overs...living without peace...of mind and nation.

Living on your own. Isolation and separation. Death.

Don't fall for this way of living...it's not living at all!  
This is a...you're at a...threshold moment.

Reflect on this...is it better...

Better to live maimed/smaller (less things and people) than dead inside?

Better to live poorer than you might like to live  
in order to do the things with your money  
that have integrity and meaning?

Better to live divorced than in abusive relationship  
or stay in relationships which smother your wholeness,  
better to say no to the promotion than take a job  
that takes you away from your family  
and yourself, better?

Better to accept someone's genuine efforts to help  
rather than critique whether they're doing it right  
or your way! (Like the disciples did!)

Better to vote than not,  
stir up debate than sit quiet?

Better to risk what comes next *than to* sit sure and secure in a self-centered, or self-  
absorbed or woe is me,  
destructive situation?

This is a threshold moment.

Not sure how you are living...then look at how your choices affect the little ones in your  
life...in our lives.

This is so important...and so true...that Jesus uses very dramatic, intense images to  
make his point.

These words in Mark do not sound like the Jesus who healed so many blind eyes and  
crippled limbs!

But realize, Jesus is not talking about destroying ourselves,  
rather he talks about releasing ourselves  
from anybody or anything...any mind set...  
that has addictive dominion over us.

No pity parties needed or excuses accepted.  
Nothing can separate you from the love of God...

the life giving spirit of oneness within the universe that is always on the side of right  
relationship, justice, peace for all...

nothing can separate you from the life you long for...  
except you!

And He goes on to cheerlead saying we have the salt within us to do what it is we need to do.

We have the courage of our faith's convictions...  
our relationship with God lives out  
as integrity...oneness...confidence. It can!

Our integrity is all we ever really have  
and it is everything we need.

And no one can take our integrity from us or keep us apart from each other...unless we/you let them!

And if your salt, your courage, your resolve  
loses its saltiness, energy, confidence:  
salt yourselves...

find and be with each other, in peace, and pray for  
and with each other.

Maintain peacefully your own distinct character and service within the company of  
other salty folks.

But shake it out/shake it up together!

It takes a community to fill a salt shaker...be a church...  
to raise an adult!

It's not a safe world out there.  
It is risky to do these things...  
but not as risky as not doing them.

So much more than may seem possible is possible  
as you  
live with holy integrity and support each other  
in prayer and action,  
living your integrity each day.....together!

Take the risk. Pray and stay!

Pat once said:  
Prayer is preparing ourselves to find the good in what God is doing!

Philip Yancey says:

When I prayer for another person, I am praying for God to open my eyes so that I can see that person as God does, and then enter into the stream of love that God already directs toward that person.

Toward YOURSELF, too!

We are praying, O Holy One!

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You have a story...a life lived. It shapes you.

How is it shaping you? Take a minute here.

Not all parts of your story come gift wrapped, but each holds a gift of awareness for you to bring you to a threshold moment filled with possibility.

It is a huge risk to use your influence *with* others against the overt power *of* others.

Often, there is no safety net.

You may have to choose between your own safety...the status quo, or your integrity.

An integrity which affects all those around you... family friends, the little ones, strangers...

*better fill up that salt shaker!*

And, it is true...to be faithful, to live with integrity... we often have to choose to put comfort and safety on hold!

BUT, realize the comfort and safety you already have is really a place of privilege from which you CAN BE courageous.

If you have a roof over your head, food to eat...

a car to drive...

bus fare....a friend to call...

if you can read...

you have privilege by worldly standards...

even as you have needs of your own.

You can be courageous.

Live from the wisdom of the whole of your story.

Not just part of it! Revisit how you made great choices in the past at previous thresholds of possibility.

From your position of privilege,  
how might you be able to act powerfully  
within your own life as well as

on behalf of these little ones...  
those at risk, whose power is weakened, and voice silenced?

What are the stories of risk happening today?

Who is taking a risk on behalf of others? ...with others?  
For you...for others?

To what places of injustice, places that lack integrity...  
is God calling you...

is it in your family, your neighborhood? ...those on the border, those who votes  
are being suppressed, bodies violated?

Are there issues in our city or nation calling you?

Really...what individuals and communities wait on your actions and courage?

**How will you gather the courage to go  
where you are called to go  
and do what you are called to do?  
This is a threshold moment.**

Deeply know, in this sanctuary space we are willing to risk for you with you! Together,  
we stay alongside, prompt each other, invite accountability with each other...

in how we think, talk, act.

We strive to have our story be one of integrity  
in the ways of Jesus.

To know our failings/sins and joys/delights...our real life stories, *and then* share  
them...

shifts the burden of carrying our failings on our own which so limits possibilities.

James says confess to each other and pray with each other. Belong and act together.

You've experienced this!!

As we share our real stories, we may see in the eyes  
of the other how God sees us.

And as we listen, prayerfully, we come to see others  
the way God does them.  
We...all...get bolder!

So, let me ask you...think on this:

- ~What are you enduring right now that is killing you?  
Does anyone know?
- ~What are the stumbling blocks to your happiness?  
Have you shared this?
- ~What is it you allow to keep you from the love of God and the wholeness of life?

**Do you have the courage to do as Jesus  
would have you do?**

It will be painful you know. Well, you know it will be!  
...thus the images Jesus uses!

And you do not have to use willpower alone,  
good intentions alone, New Year's resolutions alone.

You can turn to the power of prayer/faith...with each other...  
power that comes as you share with another believer  
your true reality and need...

letting them serve you that cold cup of water in *just listening*.

If only you will let them!  
...if we will share what is going on!  
When we "confess" and pray our true needs with another,  
we find a power...a saltiness...comes to us that we have not known till then.

Like in James' wisdom.  
You see, you cannot live life on your own.  
God made us to need each other.

And we are called to offer each other that cold cup of water,  
to be that salt,  
to bring each other back when we wander.

We need each other in this threshold time.

Life is preserved in community.

Together we have so much more courage and power.

~How is it we here, your Tippe community, can support you?

Please tell us cause we're not really good at reading minds!

**Remember:** faith is made for times such as these!

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We come to worship because we want to become more *effective* followers along the way...

because these times are indeed hard!

We come because we long to bring the power of faith to our lives,

for our own peace and joy and the betterment of our families and communities.

We want community...we long to be known and know others.

So we come.

We are a praying, salty community!

Life shakes us up.

And Jesus comes for times such as these!

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