



TOUCH POINT

Seeds of Glory – Touchpoint for March 13, 2024

John 12:20-33 (NRSVUE) Some Greeks Wish to See Jesus

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew, then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷

Jesus Speaks about His Death

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say: ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people^[a] to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Greetings to you from the mystery in whom we live and move, and have our being.

In this dialogue with his friends, Jesus was describing the vital importance of the Way of Transformation.

Here three more mystics, I think, describe the paradox of the death to life journey of transformation.

“Letting go is not in anybody’s program for happiness, and yet all mature spirituality, in one sense or another, is about letting go and unlearning. You can take that as an absolute.” – *Thomas Merton*

“The spiritual life has much more to do with subtraction than it does with addition. What the ego hates more than anything else in the world is to change—even when the present situation is not working or is horrible.” – *Meister Eckhart, German mystic*

“Every painful event contains in itself a seed of growth and liberation. In the light of this truth, return to your life now and take a look at one or another of the events that you are not grateful for, and see if you can discover the potential for growth that they contain which you were unaware of and therefore failed to benefit from. Now think of some recent event that caused you pain, that produced negative feelings in you. Whoever or whatever caused those feelings was your teacher, because they revealed so much to you about yourself that you probably did not know. And they offered you an invitation and a challenge to self-understanding, self-discovery, and therefore to growth and life and freedom.” – *Anthony de Mello, The Way to Love*

Is there another way for transformation to occur?

After Jesus told his followers it was necessary to not resist the Spirit flow of death to resurrection, he pleaded with God to get out of paying the bride price. He said, "Father is there a way I can bypass the drinking of this cup? If not, then not my will, but yours be done." What did drinking the cup mean?

I took a class from a Jesus-following Rabbi once who explained it this way: Back then, when a man wanted to marry someone, he needed to ask the bride's father and receive the bride price. For the most desired of daughters, the price was pretty steep. This was negotiated by the families, and needed to be accepted by the groom. If he chose to get out of the arrangement due to the bride price, his father was obliged to release him.

The desired woman was to share a meal. Enclosed in a fancy case was a wine goblet. The bridegroom poured wine into it, and he offered her the cup. If she drank, the marriage was a go! The couple would then put the cup away, not drinking from it again until the ceremony.

In our passage, the bride price for Jesus was his suffering and death. Jesus asks if there was a way to bypass the drinking ritual. Aren't we always wanting a spiritual bypass? We want intimacy without the commitment to all comes with that commitment. We want to experience intimacy with God without the awareness and practice. Jesus is basically saying, "Father, couldn't we just have a mass email campaign?" The answer was probably much like our God answers: noreply@divineno.org.

The way is birth -> death to self -> resurrect -> physical death -> Life beyond belief

Even the most avid gardeners cannot predict what every seed will grow to be by judging the outside protective shell. They can only assume by experience or labels to get it remotely close. With some seeds, they can only guess. But the master gardener knows. The master spreads manure over the buried seed and the neighborhood kid avoids his house due to the offensive smell. The gardener appears to be a fool as he waters the dirt covered with animal crap, whistling as he works. Why? Because he knows. What he knows is what is going on below the surface, that doodoo matters.

All of life's doodoo mixes with the nutrients, the water, the soil, and below the surface it produces gasses. The gasses create pressure on the outside of the protective shell and the seed feels like it's going to die. It does indeed die, and the weakened protective shell cracks, and new life emerges, roots first, grasping for depth, and then the sprouts. As it grows above the surface it eventually produces shade, fruit, vegetables, spice, etc. The sprout says, "Whew! You have no idea where I've been. I would not have wished this on anybody. But I'm grateful it happened."

Some of us of have had more doodoo in our lives than others. Please share the richness of your story with others. For our children, share your shade, your fruit, your new seeds to be planted. The many new seeds your story produces is what it takes for the main stalk to be glorified. To be multiplied.

The creative power of the Mystery was full in its glory. But like the ever-expanding universe, love is always expanding. The spillage of our lives, created from the Oneness and love of God, is God's glory. Honoring this life as connected to the Divine, is what it means to glorify God in all things.

When we break bread and drink of the cup we share in the journey of The Way. This bread originated from a seed. Its resistance caused pressure on the self-protecting shell. It died that the stalks could grow, and from its fruit, we are having a meal together, and God is once again glorified.

Amen

Opening Songs

Be Still

(The London Fox Taizé Choir)

Be still, know that I am God

Create in Me

(The Concordia Choir)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence and take not the Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Bible Passage

(A passage takes us from one place to another)

Touchpoint

(Where God's story touches our life story)

See Him

(Keith Duke)

See him... 1) Silent and lifeless 2) Alone and forlorn
3) Broken and helpless... crowned with a garland of thorns
4) As son and as brother 5) Related to all
6) Through the grief of a mother... hurting the most of all
7) As healer and teacher 8) As helper and friend
9) As prophet and preacher... Ignore Him? I doubt if you can.

The Meal

The Lord's Prayer

("Our Father," Taizé Reflections)

Benediction

Gaelic Blessing/Deep Peace

(John Rutter, The Cambridge Singers)

Deep peace of the running wave to you. Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you. Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the gentle night to you. Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace of Christ, of Christ the light of the world to you.
Deep peace of Christ to you.

Amen.