

BLAINE MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
LENTEN SERIES 2016

FEARLESS: The Courage to Question

Worship Service • March 13, 2016

Fearless Heart

• Introduction: Food for Thought •

Find out what you're afraid of and go live there.

- Chuck Palahniuk

There are times when fear is good. It must keep its watchful place at the heart's controls.

- Aeschylus

Fear is static that prevents me from hearing myself.

- Samuel Butler

The heart is wiser than the intellect.

- Unknown

The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of.

- Blaise Pascal

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart.

- Helen Keller

True friendship is seen through the heart not through the eyes.

- Unknown

Sometimes the heart sees what is invisible to the eye.

- Unknown

• The Word of God •

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸ The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹ Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹² The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' ¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³ Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴ Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' ²⁵ Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷ She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.' ²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet

and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34 He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' 35 Jesus began to weep. 36 So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' 37 But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?' 38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39 Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' 40 Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

• Reflection Questions from Sermon •

- Are you a person guided more by “heart than mind,” or more “mind than heart”? What are the good things about that? What are the hard things about that? How do those around you help you to find a good balance between these in your lives?
- Do you know someone who seems to be ruled by their emotions and feelings, sometimes beyond logic? How do people tend to respond to that person? Positively or not?
- Why does it seem that we “fear the heart” at some level? What happens when we make decisions guided by our rational logic alone, and not allow our hearts to weigh in?
- Is there something that you believe about God that you “know by heart” more than because the Bible says it, or even as others of faith remain unconvinced?
- How do we improve, refine and dial in, so that the “acoustics of our heart” are tuned into God?

• Notes from the Sermon - Rev. Derek Nakano •

please read this section after hearing today's sermon

- If given a choice, most folks would choose intellect over emotion, as fact-based, practical, realistic, and objective is thought by most to be more accurate than information that is provided by the heart, which is subjective and not always reliable.
- If you were trying to articulate to another why you believe in God, rational and logical arguments would be thought of as more reliable, believable, and objective while our emotional, feeling, heart-based assertions would be less believable or reliable, and more subjective.
- Ignatius of Loyola believed that while we can discern the presence of God through our minds and our intellect, far too often do we seek to rely on this, and miss the manifestations of God in our emotions, feelings, and intuition.
- Our scripture reading today reminds us that it is in those places where our emotions are most deeply felt, our compassion for others is most fully realized, that God is present and making God's-self known to us in powerful ways.
- We need not fear the presence and movements of God in the compassion our heart, for beyond logic and reason, beyond intellect and the arguments of others, beyond what makes sense and doesn't seem fair, God reveals a truth that gives meaning to life and offers to us a living hope.
- Do not fear when God speaks to your heart; follow where the presence of God in your heart leads.