

BLAINE MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
LENTEN SERIES 2016

FEARLESS: The Courage to Question

Worship Service • February 28, 2016

Fearless Bridge Builders

• Introduction: Food for Thought •

There are very few monsters who warrant the fear we have of them.
- Andre Gide

Hate is the consequence of fear; we fear something before we hate it; a child who fears noises becomes a man who hates noise.
- Cyril Connolly

Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.
- Marie Curie

Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom.
- Bertrand Russell

We will be safer from terrorist attack only when we have earned the respect of all other nations instead of their fear, respect for our values and not merely our weapons.
- Theodore C. Sorensen

Fear is the highest fence.
- Dudley Nichols

• The Word of God •

⁵ So he (Jesus) came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'.

⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?'

(Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'

¹¹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?'

¹³ Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

¹⁵ The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

~ John 4:5-15

Continuing ~ John 4:16-30; 39-42

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.'¹⁷ The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!'

¹⁹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.'

²¹ Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.'

²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'

²⁵ The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.'²⁶ Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with

her?'²⁸ Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,²⁹ 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?'³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.'⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days.⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word.⁴² They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

• Reflection Questions from Sermon •

- Have you ever travelled to another country, where the culture and community life were very different than your own? What did you gain from that experience that blessed you, and even changed your life?
- Have you ever found yourself thinking "boy, that person sure is different than me (in values, faith, culture, lifestyle)!" What did this thought/feeling do in affecting your response to that person? If you did spend time with and come to understand that person in a new way - what did you learn about them? about yourself? did any relationship develop from this? and if so, what came because of it?
- Have you ever felt excluded by others because you felt you were different? What were the circumstances? How did it affect your self-esteem?
- Donald Trump's vision for the United States is that we build walls to keep out immigrants and Muslims from our country, to keep us safe from terrorism and from drugs, gangs, rapists, etc. For Trump, these are the upsides of building a wall; do you see any downsides from building a wall such that he describes? How does that speak to those of us who have recent immigrant roots, as these same things were and could have been used to refer to us, and to our ancestors? Think back in the history of this country - how has this same scenario played itself out with other minorities and those who are different? What was the result?

• Notes from the Sermon - Rev. Derek Nakano •

please read this section after hearing today's sermon

- Our world has become a global community in so many ways - and as such is so very diverse in these days: in language, culture, ethnicity, values, lifestyles, personal concerns, backgrounds and experiences. And what is true for our world is true as well for our country, our community, our neighborhood, and even our families.
- Fear of things that can cause us harm, and those things that are different in values, beliefs, faith, lifestyles, backgrounds and experiences in this life, sometimes causes us to build walls to protect ourselves and our values and our ways of living, and seek to control our surroundings.
- Building walls that keep us safe, that protect us from harm, and keep us at distance from the things that are different than us is common and well-meaning approach to the growing diversity of the world we live in.
- However the question is: does this work? And second, what do we lose when we build the walls high enough to protect us from this growing diversity around us?
- Our Christian faith, and the life of Jesus, reminds us that this world of wall building is one that leads to superstition, persecution, fear; and we are called be not "wall builders" but "bridge builders" in our lives.
- When we build bridges with the great diversity in the world around us, we create a path to understanding that keeps our fears from dominating our lives.
- When we build bridges we discover that we have a pathway that allows us to share the gifts, blessings and life transforming faith with others; and likewise, we are able to receive the gifts and blessings that others in this great diversity around us have to give.
- This kind of bridge building, Christ proclaim, is the road that leads to peace, the pathway toward a true global community, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.