

“You Asked: Who Touched Me?!”

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-26; Mark 5:25-31

June 16, 2019

We heard a very strong reading from Proverbs this morning. Reflecting on the quality of Wisdom shows we have much to learn from Israel’s sages. Hopefully, we acquire Wisdom from applying ourselves to study of scripture, from experience, and from listening to the Spirit, or the Wisdom character of the Holy Trinity. Sometimes we allow the two facets of wisdom—the contemplative life and the active life—to drift apart. How can we recover a full circle perspective on wisdom? Wisdom calls to us from the beginning of time - from the crossroads: the intersection of the city gates and the road to eternity.

I appreciate this Wisdom reading for Trinity Sunday, including the power of the Holy Spirit with the Source of Life and the Redeeming Love of Christ our Savior. I believe this story from the Gospel of Mark gives us another set of three that give us a relevant teaching for today. We have Jesus: God Incarnate, breathing Love. We have the disciples, who Jesus has called to be his helpers. And we have the crowd, including the Woman who is in great need of being liberated from her crippling disease. She has sought healing in all the typical places to which one might turn. She has exhausted her contacts, her savings, and has almost lost all hope. But when the woman hears that Jesus is near, her spirit lifts. She knows he is on a mission to somewhere else, so she does not seek to slow him down. If she could just inch herself through the crowd and merely touch his cloak, he can continue on his way - and she will be free from her devastating disease. So..., she touches his cloak.

As you well know, Jesus senses immediately that power has left his body. I believe this is another teaching moment when he tries to solicit the help of his disciples. Not because he *needs* their help. This is All-knowing Jesus who can see through the behavior of anybody. But he includes the disciples in his question because he wants them to be alert to all that is happening. He is standing at the city gate, saying “Pay Attention!” to the needs, the concerns, and the pleas for help that are coming from the people. Learn this now: Dear Disciples, because you will be carrying on in my name when I am gone.

“Yes,” says Jesus! I do ask - in this crowd - “Who touched me?” He already knows, but he demands that she - and we - step forward. The woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth."

What does it mean for this woman to tell the whole truth? Is she confessing something about her plan and her confidence in Jesus? Is she telling the truth about herself? I imagine her saying something like, "I was desperate, and you were my last hope."

What are the consequences of this woman speaking the truth? Jesus responds with three affirmations:

- "Your faith has saved/healed you.
- Go in peace, and
- be cured of your disease." (Mark 5:34)

It may have been about 20 years ago that the Church wrote a wonderful document about the Trinity, which is called “God’s Love Overflowing.” It includes some beautiful imagery. Here are a couple of highlights:

We dare to speak of God as eternally triune because this is the way the Holy One has come to us. We therefore confidently affirm that the doctrine of the

Trinity is neither presumptuous speculation nor mathematical nonsense. About this the church must have no doubt: the doctrine of the Trinity proclaims to us the very heart of God. Using the language of Christian

tradition, we proclaim that the Father so loved the world, sending the Son for us and our salvation, which we receive in and through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Recognizing that all language about the triune God refers beyond itself by way of analogy, we draw on scripture and our confessions to speak of the triune God in historically faithful yet freshly imaginative ways. Trinitarian language should be understood to amplify and enrich our understanding of God—it cannot replace personal language.

As we seek God’s grace and wholeness, acknowledging the sin and brokenness in us, our human communities, and the whole creation, the triune God is our Rainbow of Promise, our Ark of Salvation, and our Dove of Peace (From Gail Ramshaw, *Koinonia: Services and Prayers*).

In baptism, the triune God is for us Overflowing Fount, Living Water, Flowing River.

As we offer ourselves and our gratitude in stewardship, the Triune God is the Giver, the Gift, and the Giving.

Claudio Carvalhaes speaking at the Summer Leadership Conference at Pittsburgh Seminary. **How is the world different because of what we do when we gather?** Love of the church and love of God’s people means that we stand at an intersection - that liminal space between the religious sanctuary and the world, blurring the hard and fast distinctions between “sacred” and “secular.” Like at the gate of Wisdom, where she calls everyone to attention: Our church sanctuaries are places where the realities of the world are to be brought, named, and transformed - liturgies that challenge us to bring our love of neighbor into a world that sorely needs it.