

BELOVED IN THE MIRROR

BEING UNDONE IN ORDER TO BE REDONE

Center


SIN – the Bible is against it! And it's a hard thing. We often beat ourselves up thinking that our moral weakness, inconsistency, or an ethical hiccup is sin – that we have to name each and everyone to be forgiven, in order to be loved by God. Yet that simply creates a new circle of defeat, shame, guilt, and loss. Seeing sin and the confession of sin as a focusing in our own “bad” actions can often result in merely redistributing the chairs on the boat deck rather than addressing what is deep within us.

The apostle John writes of sin in 1 John 1:5-9:

“⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷ but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

I've heard that passage quoted so many times, and each time focused on myself as a liar, unable to recognize my sin, or felt obligated to search for some truly depraved, disgusting and dark sins of which I'm unaware and have to confess. Yet sin is what separates us from God. It's not first and foremost personal. Rather sin is universal and particular, it's personal and public. It's not just about you or me – it's about all of us, about our world. It's the way in which we define and identify ourselves in function of the dominant socio-political systems of our world...these might be about success, money, producing results, accomplishing goals, not having attachments, racism in terms of inferiority or superiority, seeing ourselves as victors or victims, feeling that we have to prove our worth, earn the love we can receive, or deserve the life we want. We can all too easily become what we worship. And all too often we worship things, people, powers, other than the God who made us and is lifted up in Revelation 4.

God wants us to see ourselves, to be identified as creatures created in God's divine, holy and holistically communal image. When we see how far we are from that – not merely because of our actions, but also because of the ways in which we buy into the identity-deforming vision of the world, we are blind to what God wants. We need to be undone – in order to be redone. As we become convicted of our sin we are lead to repentance, naming what is not what God wants in and for us. That conviction leads us to turn from sin. It's the first crucial step in dismantling old harmful paradigms and disrupting sinful practices.

 **Take a look at yourself in the mirror. As you look tell yourself that you are the beloved son/daughter of God, made in God's image. That you belong to God alone. Then light a candle on the table as a living out of the scripture promise that God is in light and in God there is no darkness.**

KNOTS IN FABRIC

BEING UNDONE IN ORDER TO BE REDONE

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Take one of the knotted up fabric pieces. Untie it. Pray as you do that, asking for God to help you undo the own “knots” in your own life, that you might be redone, allowing yourself to be freed to see who and how God sees you in Christ – as God’s beloved child. If you like, you can use the lyrics to the song “You Are Mine” (on the back) as a meditative text.

I Will Come to You

You Are Mine

Leader or All

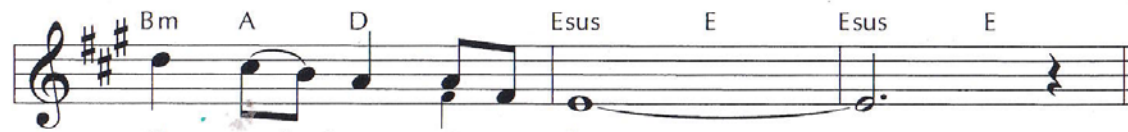
1 "I will come to you in the si - lence;
 2 "I am hope for all who are hope - less;
 3 "I am strength for all the de - spair - ing,
 (4) am the Word that leads all to free - dom; I



I will lift you from all your fear.
 I am eyes for all who long to see. (2) In the
 heal - ing for the ones who dwell in shame.
 am the peace the world can - not give.



You will hear my voice; I claim you as my choice. Be
 shad - ows of the night, I will be your light.
 All the blind will see; the lame will all run free, and
 I will call your name, em - brac - ing all your pain. Stand



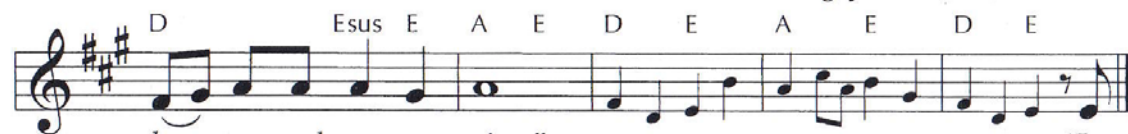
still and know I am here. (to stanza 2)
 Come and rest in me. (to Refrain)
 all will know my name. (to Refrain)
 up, now walk and live! (to Refrain)

*Refrain**All*

Do not be a - fraid, I am with you. I have called you each by



name. Come and fol - low me, I will bring you home; I



love you and you are mine."

4 "I

Presuming to speak in the voice of God, as this song does, can only be done with integrity if the singers understand their words as an expression of what they believe about God's nature and God's intentions. It is an occasion for affirming faith, not for wishful thinking.

LETTERS – STEWARDSHIP

Kids' Area

“Faithful to Christ is the outcome and the evidence of life-giving presence of Christ within the believer and the believing community. It goes without saying then that faithful stewardship of God’s resources requires recognizing the pre-eminence of Christ and that, in obedience to Christ, God’s people are called to action to relieve suffering. Christian virtue is not only an internal condition; it is also politically and socially a source of hope in the pursuit of freedom and justice. A Christian and her church must do more than clarify creeds and theology within the Christian community; a faithful representation of the gospel of Jesus Christ occurs in a community of obedient believers who act to engage the world, demonstrating their creeds by their deeds.”

(text taken from *Bonhoeffer’s Black Jesus. Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance.*
Williams, Reggie L., Baylor University Press, 2014. p. 99.)

Part of the out-flowing of worship is our recreation into a caring community with actions flowing from the justice of God, solidarity from the grace of Christ, and prophetic resistance rooted in the fruits of the Spirit. We often don’t think we can do much, yet a word - one that is coherent, liberating, loving and authentic - can change the world. How often do you get mail – that you want to get and read? Be a steward of God’s resources by sharing the hope you have in Christ by sending a word of love to someone who could use an expression of such solidarity. Don’t preach. Don’t give advice. Simply express your caring, your presence, your solidarity, your love.

Here are some people from our community who could use such a word:

Bill Bryant.

Bob Brylawski.

Albert Hussian.

Cecilia Jackson.

Ross Laverty

Elaine Price.

Myrna & Karl Shadley.

Marda Stothers.

Linda Trowbridge.



OR MAYBE YOU KNOW SOMEONE ELSE?

USE THE ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPES AND LETTER AS YOUR ACT OF WORSHIP.

PAPER SHREDDER

NAMING WHAT GOD ALONE CAN MAKE NEW

Back Row Near the Café Space

SIN – the Bible is against it! And it's a hard thing. We often beat ourselves up thinking that our moral weakness, inconsistency, or an ethical hiccup is sin – that we have to name each and everyone to be forgiven, in order to be loved by God. Yet that simply creates a new circle of defeat, shame, guilt, and loss. Seeing sin and the confession of sin as a focusing in our own “bad” actions can often result in merely redistributing the chairs on the boat deck rather than addressing what is deep within us.

The apostle Paul writes of how sin disrupts the path of the whole world, just as the grace of God reorients it in Romans 8:18-30

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¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

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God wants good for the world – in the past – in the present – and in the unfolding future. God's desire is for the world to know and be known by the Creator who made all things, who can make all things new. Confession sin is also confessing the ways in which our world doesn't know who and how it was created to be and become, the ways in which power replaces promise, lust replaces love, oppression replaces freedom, distrust disrupts communion.

Take a piece of paper and on it write a way, place, space, power, or force that goes against the will of God, which disrupts the good order of creation, life that is rooted in Christ, made possible by Christ-like love and moving toward the God-willed end of communion, stewardship and freedom. Then put it in the shredder as a visible and audible prayer for God's will to be both known and done in our world.



**God, in your mercy
make this thing new**

**God, in your mercy
make this thing new**

MANDALAS

Seated (get at fold out table near entry)

Creating art can be a form of prayer

One of the most ancient forms of prayer is the mandala and it's used across many different religions. The word mandala means "container of sacred essence" in Sanskrit. It originated as a spiritual practice in the 6th century BC out of the Hindu and Buddhist religions, but is now used by many others, including Christians.

Some of the more familiar forms of mandalas are the elaborate powdered marble designs made by Tibetan monks, the sand paintings made by the Navajo Indians, the Celtic knot, and the rose windows featured in many churches.

Active prayer to quiet the mind

You can use a mandala in your prayers in different ways. One is to find a template with a design (a coloring page) and color it in. Or you might draw your own design and color it in. You may even choose to create your own unique drawing, allowing your hand to create what comes to you in prayer.

With a mandala, you start with a circle. Create your prayer space. You don't have to stay within the lines, but this is your sacred space for prayer. You can draw your own circle on a blank piece of paper or print out a coloring page.

Then, begin to color. As you color, let your mind wander. This is not about the end result, but about the process of prayer. Spend time in prayer and talking with God as you color. Or, simply release yourself into His hands and allow God space to speak to your heart.

You can repeat scripture or a short prayer as you color, allow your mind to wander through the thoughts God places on your heart, or simply relax into the exercise.

Letting go of self to draw nearer to God

For many of us this can be a difficult prayer technique because we crave order and a plan. Starting with a blank sheet of paper and allowing yourself to draw without a plan and an end result in mind is a challenge. We usually want to know that we're working toward a great outcome or success. The whole faith journey – is about releasing ourselves to the process of following God's lead. God calls us to surrender, to release ourselves to divine control, to focus on our journey not our destination. Coloring or drawing a Mandala can be a process of spending focused, open, self-releasing time with God.



SELECT A MANDALA (OR BLANK SHEET OF PAPER) TO PRAY WITH AND THROUGH DURING WORSHIP. YOU MAY NEED TO FINISH LATER, OR EVEN TAKE SOME HOME FOR MORE PRAYER PRACTICE!

LECTIO VITA

PAYING ATTENTION TO GOD IN COMMUNITY

Back stairs

God is always showing up. In our private lives. In our public lives. In our hope. In our despair. When we're alone. When we're together.

The word **worship** comes from the old English (and also German) word "hêlig" which means "whole." It implies that worship is both the action of ascribing worth to that which makes us whole and also becoming whole in that doing of worship.

The 17th century French mystic known as Brother Lawrence wrote that worship is how we become who we are: whole. Worship is part of everything that we do. "To worship God in truth is further to admit that we are entirely contrary to Him, and that He is willing to make us like Himself if we desire it. Who will be so imprudent as to turn himself away, even for a moment, from the reverence, love, service and continual adoration which we most justly owe Him?"

Brother Lawrence started from the perspective that God is in and of all – present in every aspect, action and moment of life. Our challenge is to pay attention to God. Seeing that on our own is quite hard. That's why we're Presbyterian, believing we do it (life and faith) better in community! So do this practice today (and maybe going forward on a regular basis) to look, and possibly glimpse what God is doing in, through and among us.

This morning (or at the end of each week), take time to reflect and pay attention to where you may have noticed the Spirit of God in your community. Or, if you have not sensed the presence of the Spirit in your communal context, look for where you have desired this grace.

Take a slow breath, or two. Where have you witnessed goodness, felt kindness, or experienced something redemptive in a communal context – or longed for it?

Choose an example that surprises, delights, disturbs, or otherwise piques your interest and explore it further in the prayer practice of meditating through these contemplative questions:

- What are your thoughts around this example?
- What are your feelings?
- For what are you most grateful?; Least grateful?
- Where do you sense this response in your body?
- Is there a visual image that comes to mind?
- What would you like to say to God about this now?



You may let yourself savor or explore your example further by journaling or drawing about your example. Close with a prayer, trusting God to use this for your further blessing and/or blessing of others involved.