

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, September 10th, 2023, Pentecost 15
Exodus 12:1-14 Psalm 149 Romans 13:8-14 Matthew 18:15-20

The starting point of any counseling session seems to be answering the question, what is the problem? This seems very obvious and a simple logical place to start. One side, usually the one initiating going for counseling is asked to express the problem. What is often the reaction of the other when the problem is expressed? Their immediate reaction is to defend themselves against the criticism or to launch into solutions.

Question is then asked what did you hear? The beginning of it is an understanding that both sides are recognizing the same problem and identifying the same problem otherwise moving to solve different problems or issues.

An interesting aside in Business School case studies you read over the case and then in writing the report and express a problem you identify from the case study. But how it was defined for the case study was so that it could be solved not defining the problem so it could not be so.

The importance of working together and working through dissent.

Jesus says you will do greater things than these. this means doing them for me not as a single individual but together within the context of community. See John 14:12

When we think of consensus, we often consider it means all have to be very excited about the choice and decision, but it means most are excited and think it is the best choice, while the rest may not be so excited, but can live with the choice. And who knows what will happen the next time it comes to a decision?

We tend to think of this from the perspective of us as individuals. I think it's Joseph G. Donders who asks if this passage doesn't relate to prophesy and making the world a better place. This is the challenge moving from just doing the charity model to the social justice model. The charity idea is not confrontational like the social justice concern. It has a feel like the Robin Hood idea, of taking from the rich to give to the poor, that this whole idea is a zero-sum world, if someone gains someone else loses. But is there for the rich both benefits as well as cost and the benefits outweigh the costs?

I am thinking of the girl from Guatemala who was at Duke University and was advised not to come home for a holiday because it wasn't safe, and if she did, she

was met at the airport and driven by convoy of cars with bullet proof windows or flown by helicopter to the family compound where she had to stay for fear of being kidnapped. Who is free?

And Richard Rohr tells of his group protesting outside nuclear plants in Albuquerque, New Mexico with signs. Because there were people who counted on the jobs there for their livelihood, the signs did not have condemning statements on them but questions.

Anthony de Mello in his book *One Minute Wisdom* tells this story; the monks of a neighbouring monastery asked the master's help in a quarrel that had arisen among them. They had heard the master say he had a technique that was guaranteed to bring love and harmony any group.

On this occasion he revealed it:” anytime you are with anyone or think of anyone you must say to yourself I am dying, and this person too is dying attempting this while experiencing the truth of the words you are saying. If everyone of you agrees to practice this, bitterness will die out, harmony will arise.”

Having said this, he was gone.

Amen

May Jesus, The Good Shepherd
guide you safely
through the green pastures
and through the dark valleys.
And as the Resurrection
and the Life
raise you up to
newness of life.