

Prayer of the Holy Spirit

Good Morning Friends!

We conclude our season focused on Sharing Our God Story just as the summer season is winding down! So it is important to share a few tips as we move from comfort zones into life intersections with our stories of faith, offering prayer, and gathering hope in all we meet.

The scriptures that anchor our movement from comfort to vulnerability are familiar... Psalm 107 and the parable of the Invited Guests – Luke 14.

Let's hear once again the call to praise from the community...'

[Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

<sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—  
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,  
<sup>3</sup> those he gathered from the lands,  
from east and west, from north and south.] (NIV)

(the ones God redeemed from the power of their enemies,  
<sup>3</sup> the ones God gathered from various countries,  
from east and west, north and south) (CEB)

Yes...let us tell our story...we are the REDEEMED of the Lord!

We are the redeemed... those who know God to be a saving God...through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We know God to be a gathering God....bringing people together as community... not to be left out, not to be abandoned. We know God as the one who hears, to whom we call, for whom we cry out, and in whom we trust to supply and provide for our need.

Ps 107 a song of praise that lists the various and many ways God saves. It is worth a read of the 40 remaining verses. But you hear the essence in these first three verses... share what the good Lord has done for you!

The gospel narrative that anchors our movement from comfort to intersection is a parable which speaks to those who believe and to those who do not know God.

Let's read it again... and listen for who you are in this parable...

<read passage Luke 14:15-24>

Perhaps you see yourself as the person who challenges Jesus on caring for the least, lost & left out; or the persons who Jesus chastises for jockeying for a position of honor at the table. Perhaps, like me, you've passed on the invitation because of something you just 'gotta do'.

Maybe you are a person who said 'yes' to an invitation.

What if you are the servant, sent out to extend the invitation, to 'urge people to come' (v23)?

I don't know where you see yourself in this parable, but I know that I am called to be one who is sent to offer the invitation to feast at God's table.

I too, have received the invitation and declined. The good news is that there were people who kept offering the invitation. When I accepted the invitation... I knew I could not repay... I could only receive the gift offered. And, I soon learned that all that was expected was an authentic response... and it came in the form of love for the one who wanted me at the table of grace.

Now, I will tell you that the walk as a follower of Christ has not been easy. But, I give thanks and praise every day that I am not alone in serving the God who sends me. I give thanks that I don't have to know what to say to people... God provides, especially when I am obedient and listen with an open heart and mind.

So here are tips to remember as we move from comfort zones to life intersections:

- Be Alert – Is your spiritual radar turned on? Who does God want you to engage with and invite to the banquet of God’s love?  
(Lk 19:1-10 Zacchaeus)
- Be Bold/Brave – Are you willing to risk a connection with someone you don’t know to love them as Christ loves us? What first step needs to be taken to reach out? (Jn 4:7-10 Women at Well)
- Be Real – While we want others to see the best in us and our strengths, it is in sharing our weakness and need that speak most powerfully to others. How have you been helped through difficulty or weakness? Does your life proclaim the transforming power of God?  
(2 Cor 12:9-10 Paul though weak is strong)
- Be Persistent/ Don’t give up- How will you scatter seeds of God’s love with no guarantee someone will respond? Are you willing to share your story with someone who rejects your words, and still keep on loving them? (1 Cor 13:7; Mt 13:1-23 love perseveres; Sower)
- Be Simple/ Let your light shine- Are you able to share faith with simple words/illustrations? What would you say if asked, ‘Who is Jesus?’ (Mt 5:14-16 Light of the world...Let light shine)
- Be Loving/Imitate God – How can you imitate Jesus in the encounters with others? Do you reflect the love of Jesus with non-verbal actions?  
(Eph 5:1-2 walk in way of love)
- Be Praying/Be ready to share your story – Have you prayed for opportunities to share your story? Are you willing to be a vessel for a greater purpose in life? (Col 4:2-6 pray...be wise...full of grace)

God has been at work in our lives and the patterns of grace in our lives are in the lives of others, too. We move from unawareness (prevenient grace) to awareness/acceptance of God’s saving love (justifying grace) and a willingness to grow in faith, more like Christ, and participate in God’s mission and ministry (sanctifying grace).

I pray these tips help to share your story, offer prayer and gather hope in all we meet. I can only imagine what it will be like! So go and invite... let each one know there is room for all... and keep sharing your stories...so that all may come to the feast! May it be so. Amen!

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, moving into our 228<sup>th</sup> year as a faith community-

How will we be part of building God's kin-dom? God empowers us through Holy Spirit...to have courage, boldness, and share our God stories. Think: What has God done for you? Who have you encountered that needed to be seen, listened to, and hear a word of hope in your story?

Remember... and realize that your journey of faith is NOT just for you!

Your journey is part of the story of the cosmos (the world God created)! These stories are designed to be shared so that we can be 'the city on a hill and let the light shine for all to see.' (Mt 5:14) May it be so! Amen.

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The inheritance of our faith is to attend to God. • To attend to God's work and witness in the world. • To attend to Christ's command to love God and neighbor. • To attend to the Spirit's stirrings deep within us and in those around us.