

Diane Poulios' 8/25/13 Word from Luke 13:10-17

David asked me to comment on this text if I felt called to do so and indeed I did after reading it. So thank you for allowing me to share my point of view as a Christian, a healer, and a nurse.

As I was reading this text, a few points jumped out at me. At the end of the passage, and after the healing occurred and Jesus rebuked his antagonists: "The **entire crowd was rejoicing** at all the wonderful things that he was doing."

The entire crowd was happy and praising God because their fellow neighbor was healed. This says something to me. We constantly hear bad things about what people say and do. But is this really how people think? We are saddened when our neighbors are hurt and feel happy when our neighbors, even strangers, feel good. As much as it seems like a cliché, we are all connected. When one is sick, we take that home. It becomes a part of us. When someone has a good response to surgery or treatment, it makes us smile.

Why is that? Why are we so affected by each other? Were we made that way? Compassion is defined as "fellow-suffering" (Websters) Physically our heart seems to swell and we can be moved to tears. Even children experience this. When Alex was very little, we had a family movie night and watched "My dog named Skip." It's a touching movie about the adventures of a dog and a boy growing up together in the 1920's. The dog gets injured, by some fault of the boy. In a touching scene, the little boy cries and begs the dog to get better as he declares his love for him. Alex looked at me with tears running down his little chubby face and asked, "why am I crying Mommy?" He learned that tears were a way that we show compassion and how love affects us all.

As a nurse at Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, I took care of a male patient named Tom. He was admitted with " fever of unknown origin." This was in

the early 80s when patients were coming in with unusual sets of symptoms that became known later as AIDS or HIV.

As a nurse, I took my job seriously, providing my patients with the most healing environment I could, knowing that I and others, were a part of this process.

One day I was with Tom, holding his hand as he was on oxygen and IV therapy as he was dying. He had told me about his successful law career, his childhood, and his partner. He also told me about the strained relationship he had with his father. He explained that after being honest about his personal life with his family, his father threw him out of the house, never wanting to see or speak with him again. As a child he was very close with his father. I could see the pain in his eyes as he told me this sad story. It had been 10 years since he spoke with him.

He became weary after our conversation. I made him more comfortable in bed, gave him pain medication, touched his shoulder and asked him if there was anything else he needed before I left. But he wasn't looking at me. I turned towards the direction of his gaze and standing in the doorway, was his partner and his father. Tom looked at me. We both had tears in our eyes. The battle was over, the scars were there, but love won.

I told the other nurses what happened and there was shared happiness and rejoicing throughout the unit. Tom died late that night but with peace on his face.

I learned that healing can occur without it being physical. And that when one person is healed, so also are we.

The scripture also talks about "the spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years." Our times of sorrow, illness and disease can cripple us and it affects our spirit. We live in the western philosophy that breaks the body up into physical parts of focus. We have problems of the heart, bone,, lungs, etc. We are treated by cutting the disease out, transecting it, using chemicals or radiation to get it out. Sometimes we just drink or use pills to get rid of it.

But do our physical issues reflect what our spirit is saying? Our thoughts affect our emotions which affect our physical body which affects our spirit. They cannot be separated.

When he approached the woman whose “spirit” crippled her for so many years, he declared that she was “set free” and he touched her. His spirit connected with hers. Jesus did not want her in pain or sad. He wanted her to feel whole again.

When we are sad, the Bible states that that God is sad too. In fact, he is immensely sad when we don’t call on him when we suffer. Jesus was there for that woman. It must be that in pain, sorrow, and even happiness that our spirit touches God. He uses all of these emotions to connect with us because that is his ultimate goal – to love us.

Isn’t it amazing that through sickness and pain, we can all be healed and be connected to Jesus Christ, and each other. He heals and, because of that, so can we heal each other.

Amen.

May I have all the children come to the front of the church?

Children’s Sermon:

What am I holding up? Bandaides right. When do you need bandaides?

When you are hurt. Have any of you ever gotten hurt? What does it feel like?

Have you ever seen a friend or your brother or sister get hurt? What does that feel like?

Lets say “OUCH” ! together really loud. OUCH! That’s a strong word that everyone knows what it means. But I don’t think you can find that word in the dictionary.

What do you do when you are hurt? Do you rub the part that hurts, right? Sometimes our mom or dad puts a bandaide on our body to protect the skin and it seems to make it feel better.

Once I fell off my bike and my mom came with a big bandage for my knee and it made me feel so good. She took care of me and made me smile. She wiped the tears of my face and it didn't seem to hurt as much.

What do you do when your friend gets hurt? Do you try to make them feel better?

Why do you do that? We don't like it when other people are hurting. It makes us feel sad. Because God made us care about each other.

Jesus showed that he cared about people by making them all better and healing them. It was what we are all called to do for each other any day of the week.

So whenever you see someone sad or hurting, pretend you are a bandaide and you are making them feel better.

Here is a bandaide for each of you to have. So you wont forget that you too are like a bandaide for others.

Lets pray.

Dear Jesus,

Help us to be like a bandaide and make others feel better when they hurt.

Thank you for being our bandaide when we are hurting too.

Amen.