

The Protecting Mother We All Need Now

Luke 15:8-10 Matthew 23:37 Deuteronomy 32:11-12 Hosea 13:8
Isaiah 49: 13=15 Ephesians 6:2-3

I have learned to love a good paradox.

For example, here's a sample:

The only constant is change.

Less is more!

Love grows by giving it away.

I always lie.

"It's a pity youth should be wasted on the young." (George Bernard Shaw)

"I can resist anything but temptation." (Oscar Wilde)

There's Malcom X's explosive paradox. *"We didn't land on Plymouth Rock. Plymouth Rock landed on us."*

And then the one we learned here at Wetport Presbyterian for 5 years after the fire—and maybe we are relearning in a different way these days:

"It's all about the building. It has nothing to do with the building."

Jesus Christ was a master of paradox:

To find your life, you must lose your life.

You may gain the whole world and lose your soul.

Giving away everything makes you rich.

The fundamental message of Christianity—that Jesus is fully human and fully divine— is a mind bending paradox.

You probably don't even want to think about that one, do you?

Motherhood is a paradox—**Heart filling and heart emptying.**

“Motherhood is a risky business.” Says Rev Chris Jorgensen. *“For so many reasons. I don't know if I can capture in a single prayer all the hurt people might experience around mothering.*

Maybe today, you are simply missing your own mother.

Maybe you are mothers who are disappointed by simply missing your children—or mourning the child you could never have.

Or Maybe you are disappointed by your mother. And if your disappointment is so deep and hurtful you should focus on a grandmother today. Or sister. Or the mother within.

Maybe you are just about buckling under all the expectations of being a perfect mother.

Maybe you are struggling under the real physical demands of mothering.

Whether you are “officially” a mother or any kind of caregiver, maybe you just feel like there aren't enough hours in the day, and you can never give everything that your loved ones need.....

When you choose to love like a mother, you take the risk of letting your heart go walking around outside your body all the time.”

And then on the other side of the paradox: Motherhood is a joyful business.

You get to have a lifelong relationship with people who came right out of your own body. Wow!

You get to see a little ol' egg become a flying, soaring, winged bird.

You get to see the seed grow into a tree—and maybe a forest even.

When you are a mother, you have to do all kinds of hard, messy, impossible stuff, but you get to be happy just being who you are.

We have a cat who embodies a certain quality of a certain realm of motherhood: She doesn't really rule over the other cats in the house. But nobody messes with the Mommy Cat either.

On the joyful side—if that happens for you—you get to express nurturing love and have power in the same mothering motion.

You're the freight train's Locomotion—carrying a ton load of emotion!

We praise God!

For the joyful business!

And for the risky business!—of motherhood.

Thanks, Mom!

For making us wash the dishes.

For teaching us to read, have manners, eat something besides candy and cake and keep going to school...

.... and keep going and keep going—until we could actually become useful.

Thanks, Mom!

For telling us not to be so miserable.

And not to hang around the wrong people, especially when the wrong people was us!

Thanks, Mom, For showing us what womanhood could be.

For giving us a deeper vision of manhood.

For saying stuff to us that made us think we were hearing it straight from the mouth of God.

And maybe we were!

In the Message of Luke is this intriguing passage in which Jesus—sensing the danger of the Imperial Roman juggernaut as it began to overpower ancient Jerusalem and the surrounding territory— describes himself as being like a protecting mother, ready to give her life for the chicks.

How often have I desired to gather your children together, “Jesus says to Jerusalem, ”as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.

In other words, in a dangerous situation, with a fox on the loose—remember, Jesus called Herod—that fox!

—and the baby chicks are vulnerable!!!—

—all the mother can do is gather her chicks under her wings and hope to fend the fox off as best she can.

Jesus is like that.

Jesus is ready to give his life just to protect those whom the fox would destroy.

Sometimes in our lives—we are unable to protect people we care about.

Either because of impossible circumstances they are in—

—or poor choices they have made—

—or because of illness or injury or pain they are in—

—losses they are suffering—

—there is little we can do but open our arms to them—

—wrap our arms around them— and hold them.

But we can do that!

We can open our hearts, invite them inside

To be sheltered—when there is no shelter—

To be told: *“I am with you in this”*

We are in this together.

Our work is to save each other!

It’s interesting— isn’t it?—that Jesus chooses a mother hen as a metaphor for himself.

He doesn’t choose an eagle.

He doesn’t choose a lion.

A mother hen!—who wraps her wings around her chicks and protects them even if it makes her more vulnerable to the fox’s attacks.

So we have a feminine image of God.

A mothering God to go along with the more prevalent fathering God images.

And a very humble image—this mother hen!

Last week, on an internet news feed, I was watching Dr. Amy Acton, the Director of Health for the State of Ohio.

The mother hen of Ohio. Took fast action, when there were only a few virus cases, to protect Ohioans.

Doctor Amy is vulnerable. The Republican governor supports her, but now many Republicans in the legislature are attacking her.

Doctor Amy acknowledges the fact that we are all rattled....and sad.

She is brutally honest about the fox who is on the loose.

But Doc Amy, the mother hen, is also empowering us—by showing us what we now need and in fact cannot live without.

Real protection by our government.

Isn't that what we need? Protection so that through self governing—remember that novel idea?—we can actually save each other.

Yes, we can actually save each other!

I am seeing a parallel between this Covid-19 calamity and the gun violence calamity—where we start accepting a certain number of casualties in order to keep the cash registers going.

When what we need is a government that, like a mother, will protect us from both **and** become creative—by making the Big Shift—toward taking care of people's basic needs.

In terms of gun violence, the month of April—during this lockdown—was the worst month of 2020.

So gun violence isn't going down because of the lockdown.

We are headed again toward 40,000 gun deaths in 2020 and 3-4 times that many Covid-19 deaths in 2020 according to the Trump Administration.

This is not acceptable.

You and I need to empower a government that will protect us.

We need a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand Dr. Amy Actons—and they do exist!!— running our state, local and federal governments.

We need a mother hen—vulnerable and powerful—another paradox?

And I hear Jesus saying:

“How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!”

We come to a close with a kind of vision prayer:

Your mother is carrying you within her.

Your mother is carrying the hope of you within her.

Your mother is carrying the promise of you within her.

Your mother is carrying you to places and times she cannot go.

And now you are carrying your mother within you.

You are carrying your mother's power within you.

You are carrying your mother's beauty within you.

You and your mother are one.

Amen.

Rev. Scott Myers, May 10, 2020 Mother's Day

Westport Presbyterian Church