

Tuesday Reflection for June 30, 2020

Lovingly Listening

John 13: 34-35

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Can you believe it is the last day of June? I cannot! Why does the summer always go so fast, even when we can not do our normal activities? There is so much going on in our community, our country, and the world. I am finding it hard to process all of it, are you? We still have more questions than answers related to the pandemic. The divides in our country have never been wider. Many of us are struggling to just get through each day. Where do we begin?

If we try to take everything at once we will likely end up even more frustrated and that does not help us one bit. So, what are we to do? As I am thinking about this the first thought that comes to my mind is the benefit of conversation. When is the last time you had an honest, real conversation with someone? The kind where you sit down and listen to each other. The kind where you talk about the issues that are at hand. The kind where you need to be open to really hearing how another person feels in the moment.

Often, we are quick to advance our agenda, thinking of what we are going to say next, without focusing on what our companion is actually saying. I think about the issues of racism, of equality, of respect and I believe that we have spent far more time advancing our own views rather than listening to another's view. Do not get me wrong, the kind of listening and respect that I am talking about is difficult.

I do not know what it is like to be a black or brown person in our community. And I never will unless I am open to hearing another point of view. I do not know what it is like to be treated differently because of my sexual orientation. And I never will unless I am open to hearing another point of view. You can see where I am going.

We have serious issues in our community, and it is up to us to work toward a more just and loving society. We are the ones called by God to be disciples in the world, to rely God's love and grace to all people. We can no longer assume that someone else will take care of it. We can no longer just fire shots across the bow of social media. We can no longer keep silent. I am reminded of a quote that I saw many years ago from Martin Luther King, Jr and it captured me so much that I wrote it down and carry it in my planner. "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." We can not remain silent, to do so takes the side of the oppressor.

As we move forward to celebrate the birthday of this great country of ours, let us speak a word of love and grace from God. Pastor Jerry gifted us with signs that remind and encourage us to love everyone. May the upcoming holiday remind us that a nation divided will fall and may we be the ones to engage in honest and enduring conversation with all in order to bring our community and our nation into a just and loving society for every single person.

In Peace,

Pastor Suzanne