

It's A Mans Thing

Pentecost Sunday

Liturgical Year A

Seeds of Faith

May 28, 2023

John 20:19-23

Odysseus was a legendary Greek king of Ithaca. While Odysseus was a young lad he went hunting with his grandfather, Autolycus. On the hunt a giant boar was spotted, and the young man took off for the kill. In his haste to prove his man ship the animal dodged his blow and Odysseus was gored just above his knee. With much pride Odysseus would often recount the story of how he received his scar.

On May 11th I met an elderly couple picking up some items they purchased from me. It wasn't long before the wife informed me that he was older than herself. She then asked my age. I told her 82 and she informed me her husband was two years older than I.

As happens with some of my conversations, the husband and I were exchanging the history of our many scars. I am not certain who had the most impressive list of scars but mine included a nose job, open heart surgery, a vasectomy and a replaced knee. Her "old man" is having one of his knees replaced next week. I guess he beat me.

Throughout history scars have been a badge of honor. It is reported that facial scars are attractive to the opposite sex. In fact, men with facial scars have a 5.7% higher rate in attracting a woman. Scars are a sign of strength, bravery, and mystery.

Our Biblical text is full of rich metaphors concerning a new peace, a mission set before us and thrown into the mix are two scars. Over a month ago Jesus was crucified, and the disciples were avoiding public

places. In our text the disciples were hiding in a room probably the Upper Room where Jesus shared communion with them.

The disciples were hiding in fear from the same people who crucified Jesus might do the same to them. In silent terror the disciples listened fearfully. All of a sudden through a locked door Jesus says, “peace be with you.” Another translation read, “may you be saved from troubles.” Still another reads, “may God give you every good thing.”

Ruach in Hebrew means spirit or breath. Pneuma in Greek means wind. When Jesus entered the disciple’s hiding place, he was performing artificial respiration on his bedraggled followers. One might say that Jesus was offering a wind to lift their kites for flight. The disciples have now been authorized for the risk of discipleship, service to others.

Following his words of “peace” Jesus shows the disciples the scars in his side and on his hands. The amazing thing to me was that Jesus was able to break away from his scars, his past, and offer words of encouragement.

For most of us, our scars freeze us in the past and we are not able to move on. For too many of us scars tell us about the human violence one encountered, the scars of Jesus point to hope, forgiveness, and a mission.

On the tail end to a violent death, Jesus exposes his scars to a scared huddled group of followers and whispers peace. We are encouraged to transform our pains, our scars. As Rohr so plainly stated, “if we do not transform our pains, we will most assuredly transmit it to others.”

We all live in a fear-based society with past grievances hanging around our necks like an albatross. Accept the breath of peace and forgive others so they too might receive the blessing of peace.

May our Badge of honor not be our physical scars of the past but through the services of kindness we are performing today. Let the peace from Jesus offer us a new breath of wind to soar us ever higher.

Dennis Siebert