

“This Is No Time To Be Patient”

Psalm 89:20-37

Ephesians 2:11-22

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Jesus embodies intentional measured engagement offering healing and wholeness to all people. I had the privilege of studying New Testament under Ralph P. Martin at Fuller Theological Seminary. In his book *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, Professor Martin, referencing Paul’s words in Ephesians 2 writes, “The world that we know and inhabit is fallen, divided, suspicious, and full of the possibility and threat of self-destruction. The apostle’s teaching holds out the hope and prospect of a reconciled, unified, and amicable society, whose microcosm is seen in the church’s worldwide, transnational, and reconciling family.”<sup>1</sup> In this regard, Bryan Loritts, editor of *Letters To A Birmingham Jail: A Response To The Words And Dreams Of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* quoting Martin Luther King Jr. writes,

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block is not the White Citizens Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice, who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice, who constantly says ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can’t agree with your methods of direct action,’ who paternalistically believes that he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph P. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1991), 32.

<sup>2</sup>Bryan Loritts, ed., *Letters To A Birmingham Jail: A Response To The Words And Dreams Of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers, 2014), 113-114.

We still have intentional measured work to do action to take. In this way, the dream of being God's one humanity will be fulfilled.

From the Psalter Reading, the Epistle Reading and the Gospel Reading, we learn that God, as we know God in and through Jesus Christ, is the Rock of our salvation, our life's foundation and our Shepherd. The statement by Jesus that he is the way, the truth and the life, the teachings of the Greatest Commandment, the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 25 are imperative to be intentionally engaged in measured work and action as members of God's family. Psalm 89:26 reads, "He [David] shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and Rock of my salvation!'" Ephesians 2:19-20 reads, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens....and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone." And Mark 6:34 reads, "As he [Jesus] went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." We aspire to more actively love others into being members of God's household, God's one humanity.

In Mark 6:30-34, 53-56, we lift up Jesus' priority of recognizing that all people are looking to find a better way to live. Jesus and his disciples found their work exhilarating and exhausting. Yet, they found time to pause for prayer and needed rest. Their work and rest was done in intentional and measured ways. The compassion Jesus had for the crowd was innate but most of the faces depicted abject poverty and the pain of suffering with disease. Jesus taught the disciples that ministry is never convenient. Yet, the faces compelled Jesus and the disciples to offer healing and wholeness. Mark 6:56 reads, "And wherever he [Jesus] went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in

the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.” Intentional and measured ways of healing and wholeness was offered to those who sought out Jesus, the Good Shepherd.<sup>3</sup>

Deescalating fear and hostility creates opportunities for reconciliation and unity. Remember, this is no time to be patient. Action is required. May your words and actions reflect intentional and measured holy impatience. Many are gathering to touch the fringe of Jesus’ cloak through you. Amen.

*This sermon was preached (In-Person with COVID-19 protocols and Livestream due to the Coronavirus) on Sunday, 18 July 2021  
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<sup>3</sup>In the two paragraphs of textual analysis above, I have benefited from the thinking of Deborah Sokolove, Sammy G. Alfaro, Lucy Lind Hogan, Max J. Lee and John M. Buchanan in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery, Cynthia L. Rigby and Carolyn J. Sharp, editors, *Connections, Year B, Volume 3* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2020), 168-170, 171-173, 173-174, 175-177 and 177-178.