

June 24, 2018  
The Tie that Binds "Moved"  
Galatians 5:16-26  
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My Mom had me take dance when I was eight years old. It was a long year. It didn't help that I was the tallest child in the class, and to add insult to injury, I wasn't all that graceful. There was a reason my mother didn't give me the name "Grace."

Despite all that, dance did turn out to be beneficial, for it was there that I first learned to work together as a team. There, I learned that my steps or missteps impacted others, and that what we created together could be so beautiful.

So much of the dance of life is partner or troupe work. So much of life is the dance of relationships. Yet, in a country of rugged individualism and supposedly "self-made" men and women, we can get the impression that going solo and being independent is the best and most effective way to go.

Yet, from the very beginning, God never meant for us to operate as isolationists. God had a relationship with Adam, who then thought Adam should have a relationship with another human. God then had a relationship with Adam and Eve, and they had a relationship with each other. When Adam and Eve tried to go solo without God, God searched for them. Asking "where are you. From the first bite, their relationship with God and each others was severely impacted. They became divided, in the midst of their solo endeavor, and they ended up blaming each other and hiding from one another, and God too!

As we talked about a few weeks ago, when it comes to God's plan for humanity – it is a warp and weft thing with both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Yes, our relationship with God and our relationship with one another matters! It is God's masterpiece of weaving, a spectacular textile.

Now, what about learning the moves when it comes to the dance of relationships. We need to learn those dance steps, so we know how to be in relationship with one another. And, the Good News for us is, God teaches us those dance steps in scripture and through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Our reading for this morning speaks of steps and missteps. When it comes to missteps the Bible talks about what happens when we get out of rhythm with others, by acting as if the only one who needs to move and shake is ourselves. Our faith informs us of the kind of missteps that can happen when we have selfish motives. In other words, all that matters is ones self. Everything on the list comes about from only thinking about yourself – as if there is only one person in all universe is moi. This is why we lose our temper, have conflict and opposition, are jealous, and even party.

Yet, as people of faith, we believe a couple of things which turn this picture around. First, that all have the indwelling God within them. Which means, the very essence of God's Spirit is available for us to use for the benefit of others. Galatians puts it this way: we have the Spirit of God within us, and when we are staying connected to God, dancing together in that relationship, we can do these things that can be used in the dance of life, the dance that we need to do with one another, and they are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

When it comes to what happened at St. James last Sunday, when we had protesters demonstrating what they feel and how they see others, we demonstrated that we contain the indwelling God and so does everyone else, and that God's Spirit and the fruit of that very Spirit shows up in us in our dance with others. And it showed up through the way you have and continue to show forth love, be peaceful, patient, good, kind, faithful, gentle, and demonstrate self-control.

Scripture goes on to say, that those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with its selfish and self-centered passions and desires. Instead, we live by the Spirit and follow the Spirit. We don't become arrogant (there's the "I" again – I know more, matter of fact, I know everything), nor do we make each other angry (rather the love for the other becomes our motivation, not our own self-satisfaction or to reiterate or affirm our spirit of self-righteousness). Nor, do we become jealous of one another. Rather, we are the opposite of that: content, unresentful, unworried, undoubting, calm, confident, satisfied, and trusting.

Relationships are a dance! To be connected is to find a rhythm with those around you. And when we are in step with the rhythm of the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit will make the ties that bind us to each other secure.

Rilke was so right when he wrote, "That designing Spirit, the mastermind of all things on earth, loves nothing so much in the sweeping movement of the dance as the turning point." Therefore, let us then be about the turning point, turning away from all that is not life giving, and toward others in a way that is life-giving for them, and in so doing, it will prove to be life giving for us as well.

Matt Harding, was once a gaming software developer who one day decided he did not want to have his life purpose be the making of games which glorified and supported the acts of annihilating and killing others. So, he left his “successful” job and traveled the world. In each place he visited he would dance, and not very well I might add. Soon, others began to join him, and today he is known as Dancing Matt. Here is a log of some of his journey of dancing around the world.

(Show YouTube video “Matt Harding Dancing Around the World)

Matt Harding dances badly all around the world, but there is a catch – he invited others to dance with him. Whether we are a bad dancer (myself included) or not, let us commit to being moved, and with the help of the Spirit, let us dance with others, so that love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, patience, faithfulness, and self- control may be known and experienced others, to the end that those ripples may be felt around the world. Blest be the tie that binds.