

Small Talk – March 29 2021
Required Facial Covering When in Public – Day 250
By Michael Small

This morning in Minneapolis opening statements are being made in the trial charging Derek Chauvin with the murder of George Floyd. This trial, ironically, begins as we enter Holy Week – a week where Christians reflect upon the big questions – life and death, amazing hope and utter despair, justice and injustice, faith, unconditional love, and despicable hate.

In the two thousand years since another man was speaking about the power of love, the forces of control, power, fear, and hate rose up and sought to destroy a message of redemptive love that had the potential to change the world. That redemptive hope and love still struggle to break forth in the hardened soil of cynicism and resistance to transformative change.

Many would say throughout history, the message of Jesus to love and not hate, to forgive and not hold onto grudges has failed. And yes, all of us could easily speak to and lift up the many failures of the institutions who bear the name of Jesus Christ. Too often even the church and people of faith have fallen short of that which we aspire to be, to walk and work with the words of Micah embedded in our hearts and actions – “Love kindness. Do justice. Walk humbly with the presence of the most holy.” More importantly we fall short of these simple words of Jesus “love your neighbor, even your enemies, as you love yourself!”

I can only speak for myself as I say, during this Holy Week I will rededicate myself in prayer and action to follow in the ways and works of Christ. The message is really simple – LOVE. When I succeed – Love. When I fail – Love. When I am tired and discouraged – Love. At the beginning of the day – Love. At the end of the day – Love. In all my ways and thoughts – Love. Is this not what Jesus taught and lived. And following that path of all consuming and enlightening love, this practice led to resistance and ultimately to crucifixion, execution, and death.

When one shapes their lives in love, they become a powerful and transformative force. Currently I am reading *The Book Joy* by Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu. They speak about how love and joy have sustained them in the real hardships of life. Think about people who have confronted the powers and evils of the world with love – Martin Luther King, Jr., Oscar Romero – a Catholic Priest assassinated in El Salvador, Nelson Mandela who truly loved his enemies, Dietrich Bonhoeffer who resisted Nazi Germany, John Lewis who shaped his actions in love – and the many, many more whom you can name and lift up.

I invite you to reflect upon Holy Week, reflect upon the events of this week, and use the lens of love. To truly love means that we will work for justice for all. To truly love means

that we will work for a world where no one is hungry. To truly love means that we will live in a world where no one is homeless or stuck in fear and despair. To truly love is hard work and requires incredible discipline. Begin, continue that walk this week.

The Apostle Paul writes “There are, in the end, three things that last: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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