

1

How many times have you found yourself in a hurry? As children, our biggest hurry may be to get to our next birthday or Christmas celebration, but as teenagers, we are in a hurry to get our licenses to drive and then to graduate from school. Later we're in a hurry to get to work in the morning, and then in a hurry to get home in the evening, such as a mother who

was in such a hurry. She had been shopping [after work], and it was time to get home. But she still needed to get some gas for her car. She pulled into a service station to fill her tank with gas. She stopped the car and got out. She then realized the wrong side of her car was by the fuel pump. She got back in her car and drove to the other side of the pump. Once again she realized that in her haste she had simply moved the wrong side of the car to the other side of the pump! She jumped back in the car and began her third attempt. Her preschool son who had been watching this whole process from his car seat now asked his mother, “[Why such a hurry?] Are you gonna get it right this time, Mommy?”¹

While working in our careers, we may feel in a hurry to get to retirement. In retirement we may wonder why we were in such a hurry to get to each

stage of life, for life seems to have gone so quickly. We might wish to go back and live a bit slower through some of those years—school, raising children, enjoying our careers.

Thousands of years ago when God's people escaped from the cruel slavery of working for the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, they found themselves in a hurry to get away. But can you blame them? After living in Egypt for 430 years, with many of those years in forced labor, I imagine they were ready for a change!

As they prepared to leave, Moses invited them to prepare a special meal to honor their escape: a lamb for each household, though if a family was too small for an entire lamb, they could join their neighbors in sharing one. Before they left, they spread lamb's blood on the edges of their exterior doors as a symbol that they had been saved, as though death had passed over their homes as the firstborn of their oppressors died. That's where the Jewish feast of Passover got its name—a celebration that death did pass over their ancestors and they escaped to freedom.

But they were also to prepare something else—bread without yeast, for they didn't have time to wait for the yeast to rise in the bread, which resulted in a flat bread

2

that Jews have continued to make every year in the spring to celebrate this historic event.

I can just imagine some children in those households wondering, *Why such a hurry? Where are we going? When will we return? Can I take my toys? I wish everyone would just slow down.*

I think those are questions many of us find ourselves asking throughout life: Where are we going? When will we slow down? Life is full of unpredictable moments, and even when we prepare as thoroughly as those who were escaping slavery, we may still find ourselves unsure what's happening.

I've felt that way lately. As the COVID-19 trends have gone down, I've felt encouraged, hoping life would return to somewhat normal again soon. But this weekend I read that the numbers are going up again, with even the President announcing that he has been infected by the virus. I've felt in a hurry to get through this virus, wondering how long it will take.

Those who escaped from the Pharaoh may have felt a similar uncertainty, wondering how long they would travel to a new destination. Wondering where

they would find enough food and water. Wondering how long they would have to walk through the hot sands of the desert.

They had no idea that people of faith thousands of years later would look back at their hasty exit with flat bread as a sacred moment. Not only do Jews commemorate this escape with the breaking of bread, but we Christians remember that Jesus was breaking the Passover bread when he met the last time with his disciples. Knowing the dangers that surrounded them, he invited the disciples to remember him each time they broke bread together. That Passover meal for the disciples became the Last Supper for the church, an event that reminds us that no matter how tough life gets, God continues to move among us, offering hope.

For those in slavery thousands of years ago in Egypt and hundreds of years ago here in our own nation, God was present. For those longing for an end to racial injustice, God is present and working among us now, as our annual Reconciliation Offering reminds us. This offering helps "fund our Church's mission imperative to become a pro-reconciling and anti-racist church utilizing experiential education, inclusive worship, and intentional

3

dialogue” and “to promote healing, relationship, and restoration in the whole family of God.”

As lay leader Yesenia Caldwell from Iglesia Hermandad, Indianapolis, said, “To show up is more than a selfie at a protest, or a social media post... showing up means to cry with me, and to let the pain of my people’s tears move you to fight WITH those of us who are pushed to the sides because of the color of our skin, the thickness of our accents, or the documents we hold.”²

That’s what Reconciliation is all about—coming together to hear one another’s story, to sense the pain and struggle in another person’s life. Together we really hear one another and strive to make the world a better place for all of us to live.

Isn’t that what God has been up to all these years, trying to reconcile us to God and one another? God has been letting us know we’ve been

heard, as when God said to Moses at the burning bush, “I’ve clearly seen my people oppressed... I’ve heard their cry of injustice because of their slave masters. I know about their pain. I’ve come down to rescue them.”³

How appropriate that we remember this story on World Communion Sunday, on a day when we place our denominational differences aside and break bread together with fellow Christians all over the world. Evangelical and Mainline, Protestant and Catholic, we share one Table, One Bread, One Cup. That’s Reconciliation. That’s why we’re in such a hurry. It’s more than not waiting for the bread to rise. It’s about hearing one another. Befriending those who are different from ourselves. Trusting that God is working in all our lives. Striving to bring reconciliation to the world. That’s why we’re in such a hurry.

¹ Hodgkin, Michael. *1001 More Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking: Fresh, Timely, and Compelling Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers, and Speakers*. Zondervan. Kindle Edition, #878.

² <https://reconciliationministry.org/2018/special-offering-2020/>

³ Exodus 3:7-8.