

## MIDWEEK MISSIVE 4/05/19

One of the important parts of my job is to be with people in times of anxiety or distress. When people are going through difficult times, they need someone to talk to, someone to share with, someone who will listen and not judge. One of the most important things I learned in seminary was that to truly be there for those in difficult times the pastor must be a “non-anxious presence”. In short, that means you need be present to just listen. As time goes on, I was taught, the people you sit with will not remember what you said, but they will remember that you were there. And they will become stronger because of it.

So, how does that happen? I can't say for sure, but I think that if I came to those situations ready to answer questions and solve problems, the person dealing with the difficulty will not be served well. Oh, the immediate problem might be solved, but the person would not have learned anything about solving the problems on their own. When the non-anxious listener sits with them - without offering answers - the person dealing with the difficulty feels as if they are not alone, and are strengthened to face their difficulties. Hard times are never fun; but there are learning experiences in the midst of our difficulties that will serve us going forward.

I've been thinking about this this morning because of the content of my morning devotional, “Jesus Calling”. For those who don't know, “Jesus Calling” is devotional book of daily readings. What makes it interesting is that it is written as if Jesus is talking to us...Jesus is calling to us. I have found it a wonderful devotional companion for a while now, and would highly recommend it. But here's what part of it said today:

*“As you go through this day, trust Me to provide the strength you need moment by moment. don't wast energy wondering whether you are adequate for today's journey. My spirit within you is more than sufficient to handle whatever this day may bring. That is for the basis for your confidence in quietness (spending time alone with Me) and confident trust (relying on my sufficiency) is your strength.*

As I read those words, I realized that when I sit in my role of “non-anxious presence”, the person I am with is able to get out of their own head and rely, not on me, but on the strength that comes from their faith. Because the fact is, our relationship with Christ is enough! It is enough to see us through...it is enough to remind us that we are not alone...it is enough to keep us grounded. It is enough.

God never promises there will not be hard times. God promises us that we will never be alone as we walk through those hard times. It's something I need to be reminded of every now and then. You, too?

Please keep Chuck PetitBon in your prayers. He is hospitalized with a bacterial infection. He is not able to have visitors at the present time, but hopefully will be home early next week. And keep Marcia in your prayers, too, during this stressful time.

Be peaceful,  
Rev. Brad

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