

Be Still

A Sermon for Sunday May 17, 2020

Offered at Worship on Zoom by Rev. Karen Burger

(with Excerpts from Bishop's Video and Full Video by Karyn Ann, a West Coast based singer)

I want to start off today's sermon with sharing of a portion of a very inspirational video from our Bishop. In this message entitled "State of the Conference," meaning our New York Annual Conference of the UMC, he begins by naming how we are all feeling....watch and listen with an open mind and heart...

[\(click to play "State of the Conference" by Bishop Bickerton, segment on too much and too little, 14 to 2:38\)](#)

Did you relate to that at all? Too much, too little...a good way of categorizing what we are experiencing in a way we never have before, though perhaps for some of us it is triggering for past experiences...when we had too much of something, too little of something...think for a moment...what did you have too much of? Too little of?

During this time of stress, our Bishop has some advice for us...watch this next segment...

[\(click to play segment on treating each other well, and breathing, 2:41 to 8:03\)](#)

I am reminded of a Christian song: "Breathe, just breathe, come and rest, at my feet, O breathe, just breathe...chaos comes, and all we really need...is breathe" (Johnny Diaz) I am also reminded of Jesus taking time to breathe, getting some rest in the bottom of the boat, even as a storm was brewing! He trusted God at work at all times. Here is a video by a singer of her song "Be Still..." In the video she rests and listens to a song within and imagines it being performed with her band. We too can close our eyes and let God give us visions and bring to mind familiar songs we love, including those from SoulShine. [\(click to watch "Be Still," by Karyn Ann\)](#)

The Psalmist had it right, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Great advice. If we never slow down, are we trying to avoid what is within by distracting ourselves with activity and other people? Be still and take a look inside.

It is also good advice for fruitfulness. We have to press pause and be still with short breaks in the midst of our coping and trying to get things done. When we take breaks, we work MORE efficiently and effectively. Especially in stressful times. A hard lesson to learn. That means breaks in homeschooling, in having difficult discussions, reviewing finances, consoling friends...everything we do now is laden with more. So we might be tempted to become frenetic, but this doesn't help. We are like the disciples on the boat with wind and waves that come up (or snow squalls, mini-tornados and gusts, or new headlines) then pass. Thank God they pass and to use the analogy of weather and physical surroundings, we see our azaleas and dogwoods and get breaths of warm air. Yet, it is a surreal time. As it was for the disciples in the boat with Jesus. He reminded them to have faith when the wind and waves pound. And then He calmed the wild weather! With a word. Christ can calm us inside too.

Have you ever been in tumult inside and had a friend or pastor or counselor calm you with a word? I hope you have. That has been my experience. Jesus can also be that friend. A word from Scripture can have that effect. “Be still, and know that I am God.” “Or “come unto me, all you who are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (JESUS)

Friends, there is much more our Bishop shares in the video and I will send it out so you can see the whole thing. And offer discussion opportunities. Know that there will be times when we are in shock from how different our lives and world are. But God is with us. Always! And we can be here for one another. Treating each other well, as our Bishop appeals. We can be extra careful knowing we all are struggling in our own way. But with God's help, we can make it through! Even as we live out our call as Church differently in these times. We are still the Church, a body of believer who serve God and the world.

[\(Click to play ending of Bishop's video: 22:22 to 25:25\)](#)

Amen.