

IMAGINATIVE PRAYER | *Wounded Healers*

I want to invite you to close your eyes and picture your hurt – the ways you’ve experienced pain and hurt in the church, maybe generally or maybe very specifically or even recently – picture it as an actual wound on your body. Is it a paper cut? A stubbed toe? And don’t underestimate the resenting power of paper cuts and stubbed toes... Is it a stone that’s been thrown at you? A cut from a scissor? Is it a wide-open gash? A limp you’ve been walking with for a long time? Or is it more like a paralysis that leaves you barely able to move at all? Is it an arrow in your back?

Picture the hurt you’re carrying as a physical wound.

Now I want to invite you to picture Jesus coming to you right at the place your wound. Picture Jesus wanting to care for and tend to your wound. As part of the process, picture Jesus showing you those who have wounded you – appreciating that being hurt by the “church” actually means being hurt by people; are there names, faces, friends, family members who come to mind? Picture them, or maybe one specific person.

Picture Jesus reminding you of them, reminding you of his love for them, reminding you that it’s not okay how they hurt you, but also reminding you that they’re wounded too.

And now, try to picture Jesus inviting you onto the path of compassion, of forgiveness, the path of release, the path of grace, the path of freedom, and the path of healing. What does the path look like? Is the ground rough, or smooth? Is it straight or are there curves and bends in the road? What’s your next step in the journey? Where could it take you? How might it heal you?

Now picture Jesus as he begins to physically tend to your wound. Is he wiping it? Cleaning it? Putting on medication or ointment? Bandaging, soothing, repairing, mending? What physical attention does it require? Picture Jesus, not only tending to it externally, but doing the miraculous work in and through your very cells, the way only a body can, fading bruises, closing wounds, healing cuts, repairing scars; all in a way that takes time, may even leave some scar tissue, but still brings healing, and even love, as wounds turn to scars, and scars that eventually turn to stories of healing.

Now notice something you maybe hadn’t noticed yet... Notice something about the hands of Jesus that shouldn’t be in the hands of anyone. Notice deep wounds. Pierced holes. Notice scar tissue that tells an inescapable story. And notice the love and healing that still seem to flow from these same hands; that seem to flow from these wounds.

Now picture these holy hands – unlike any other – while still finding yourself in the process of healing, taking you by the hand and inviting you to take part in sharing this love and healing with others who are wounded.

Who is he bringing you to? Who around you needs healing? Who can you offer grace and forgiveness to? Who needs your arms to wrap around them? Who can you help heal?

As you take a few more deep breaths, allow Jesus to continue inviting you on the journey of healing, both personally and in this community that we call the church.