

Squamish United Church

March 11, 2018

Rev. Karen Millard

Lent IV

Scriptures:

Ephesians 2:4-10

John 3:14-21

John 4:1-15

The Art of Receiving

It is so easy for us to think of ourselves as the ones who have something to offer and yet when we are never willing to receive the relationship is one way. This is huge for those of us who find ourselves in leadership roles, it is huge for women and mothers and caregivers. Who here finds it easier to give than receive?

Who here has had an experience of really wanting to help someone who won't take the help?

And you watch them struggle but they won't let you give what you could to assist.

John 4:4 - Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus is weary from probably walking most of the day in the hot, dry weather. The woman is an outcast, she's a Samaritan, there's racial tension to say the least between the Jews and Samaritans... so its scandalous to talk to a woman let alone that woman. And yet Jesus talks to her and asks her for water. He asks for something he really needs. Its a real need, not a fake one. Genuine relationship goes both ways. It involves both ask and receiving. I won't go into the many other truths about this story you've likely heard a sermon or two on those already. Today however, I wanted to highlight that Jesus went to an unexpected person of interest to ask for water.

When Jesus asked of this unnamed woman for a drink of water, he challenged the best from her. He could have struggled to figure out his own way instead he risked asking someone who he shouldn't even be speaking to. It is often the case when we offer to assist someone who harbours a grudge against us, or feels we are in a different category than them they will ruffle up and resist. Yet, if we ask them for **help**, they usually surprisingly respond. Jesus appealed to this lady's kinder instincts, thus eroding the cultural wall between them.

With that... I'll introduce our next video. The Art of Receiving.

<https://vimeo.com/117428373>

Our neighbours have a lot to offer and if we humble ourselves... we can ask for help and receive.

Give them joy of giving. Not just us... we tend towards paternalism. Provider... power imbalance when we're the do-gooders and everyone else is the receiver.

Real relationship requires give and take. It steals a persons' dignity if they are always in a position of receiving.

Pat has told me a story several times of a little girl picking hydrangeas for her mom (she tells me this story because she remembers it was my wedding flower). That is one of Pats gifts - she remembers you and your story if you share it with her and she will carry it and ask you about it. Anyway. This little girl took her mom some flowers and her mom said "Oh I hate those flowers." How did that little girls feel?

The truth is when my daughter makes me a mud pie... or card or some craft or... I receive it - even if its a soggy cooky (I may not like it - that's not the point) the point is she wants to share it with me and I know how deflating it can be when you want to offer someone something and they say "No.. I'm good."

In *Mere Christianity* C.S. Lewis wrote: "Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him."

Has anyone tried writing names on their block map? Has anyone met someone knew? Have any strangers become acquaintances? The truth is if we take One small step the snowball will get started. If you don't want to do it for your faith maybe do it because of these facts:

- There is 80% less crime in within neighbourhoods when you know the first name of your neighbours
- People live longer when they are literally connected to their neighbours

- Think about it - if there is a Natural disaster - your neighbours are your first responders (especially when all resources are overwhelmed) - perhaps this is one of the reasons why people in third world countries tend to be more neighbourly.

Jesus is smart he knows these things

Jesus is controversial he is going to love even the neighbours he is not supposed to.

Jesus is real when he needs assistance he asks for it.

I thought this ted talk was very interesting - I'm just going to show you a snippet

https://www.facebook.com/TED/videos/10159879660130652/?hc_location=ufi

Questions:

So I wonder do you know

What are your neighbours knowledgeable and/or passionate about? How could you enter into their world and allow them to serve you?

Are you good at allowing other people to care for you? What makes it hard?

Pride? "I'm good.". Don't want to engage? Feel you need to reciprocate and you don't want to?

How often do you ask for help from someone outside of your immediate family?

What current needs do you have that a neighbour may be able to help you with?

Mechanics. Carpentry, tools, artists in neighbourhood. Architect. Care provider