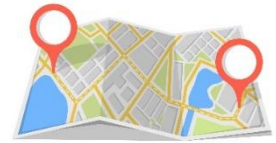


A Jesus' Shaped Vision for Life

Session 4: Finding a Map when Feeling Lost

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." When Jesus shared these words, he knew that sometimes we are the ones who are hungry, thirsty and need a welcome. How do we find a way forward in challenging times when we don't know the way ahead? What are the compass points that can help us?



We also walk alongside others who are in challenging times. How can we express the love of God and be God's hands and feet in this time, in ways that are truly helpful? What is our map for living a Jesus' shaped life with others and for others on difficult days?

Opening Questions *(select 1 or 2 questions)*

- Tell about a time when someone did something unexpected that was helpful for you.
- Tell about a time when you reached out to help someone or served as a volunteer.
- What is one task or project that, if someone did it for you, would reduce your stress or feel like an act of care?

In the Rearview Mirror: *Creating a Roadmap*

- What is a question or insight from an earlier session that you continue to think about or wonder about (if any)? Did you try any of the take-away actions? How did it go?

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, come to us and shine your light into the times when we or others around us feel lost and without a map. Guide us to find hope, restoration and a new way forward in you. Help us to be a blessing to one another on ordinary days, difficult days and joyful days. Today, help us to listen to one another in this group with care and attentiveness. Hold us back from rushing to easy answers or problem-solving. Help us to be your loving presence. Guide and teach us to live with trust in your hope, peace and love. Amen.

What Does the Bible Say?

Luke 8: 40-56 (NRSVUE)

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹ Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus's feet and began pleading with him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.

As he went, the crowds pressed in on him. ⁴³ Now there was a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, and immediately her flow of blood stopped. ⁴⁵ Then Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are hemming you in and pressing against you." ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I noticed that power had gone out from me." ⁴⁷ When the woman realized that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer." ⁵⁰ When Jesus heard this, he replied, "Do not be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved." ⁵¹ When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James and the child's father and mother. ⁵² Everyone was weeping and grieving for her, but he said, "Do not cry, for she is not dead but sleeping." ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But taking her by the hand, he called out, "Child, get up!" ⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and she stood up at once, and he directed them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astounded, but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

Think About... *(optional, depending on time)*

- What did you notice in the Bible reading? What words or phrases stood out to you?
- Which character (or group of people) in the text are you drawn to?
- What does Jesus tell us or show us about being in difficult times?
- Why do you think Jesus ordered the parents to tell no one what had happened?
- If you were the woman who reached out to Jesus or the synagogue leader, how would you have felt at various times in this story?

What Do Others Say?

Writer: Jeanne Hartfield (former Incarnation pastor)

If you've ever traveled from General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, you've likely seen the sign for the "Recombobulation Area." The Recombobulation Area is the zone just past security where people can take their time to regroup and gather their belongings so they're prepared to enter the next phase of travel.

As it turns out, the word "recombobulation" isn't in the dictionary. It was made up by Barry Bateman, former airport director in Milwaukee.¹ "Recombobulation" is the antidote to one of my favorite words—discombobulation. When we are discombobulated, we are out of sorts, in a state of confusion, or disoriented. Therefore, recombobulation means to put back in order, to cause to think clearly again, or to reorient.

I love that it's an assumption that people are going to feel discombobulated after going through airport security, so of course we need a "Recombobulation Area." Wouldn't it be great if a "Recombobulation Area" was clearly marked any time we're dealing with change and challenge, disruption and disorientation from the events and realities of our lives? Because, let's face it, we all experience moments and seasons of discombobulation.

Many of us have received messages from ourselves and others that life is "supposed" to be a certain way and any deviation from that is out of the ordinary, problematic, or somehow due to our weakness or failing. Many of us have been enculturated to hold our struggles and our needs close. We've received messages across our lifetimes that have said in various ways "don't be a burden to others." We forget that part of doing life together in community is sharing one another's joys and sorrows.

What if the first step into the recombobulation area is acknowledging to ourselves that we've been tossed off course? What if naming our current reality before God and trusted others helps us to be safely ensconced in a space where we can breathe and be without pressure to rush into the next phase?

At the heart of life together in a community shaped by the transforming love of Christ is a three fold invitation: 1) to know that Jesus meets us and is present with us in all moments and stages of our journey no matter our state of discombobulation or recombobulation; 2) to create and hold safe space for one another in all seasons; and 3) to enter as we are into the safe space of

¹ <https://www.rd.com/article/recombobulation-airport-new-word/>

community centered, in the love and presence of Jesus to regroup, reorient, or “recombobulate” when needed.

We see all of these movements in our Bible reading from Luke 8. Across his ministry, Jesus has been creating and holding space for people to come to him for healing. This pattern made it possible for the two main characters of this story—the woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for 12 years and the leader of the synagogue whose daughter was dying—to come to him in hope with the gut-wrenching realness of their situations. What was Jesus’ response to each of them? He received them with compassion and care, honoring their faith and vulnerability, and meeting them with healing.

None of us are immune from the disorientation and discombobulation that comes with the challenges, changing seasons, and disruptions of life. We all have seasons when we are better able to hold safe space. We all have seasons when we need to be held in safe space. We don’t need to do either one perfectly. We don’t need to have the right words at the right time. We don’t have to keep up appearances to protect others or ourselves. Jesus meets us in the realness and mess of whatever we’re experiencing and invites us to simply be present with him and each other.

Given that, what does it look like when we hold recombobulation space for one another? What does it look like when we hold recombobulation space for ourselves?

Whatever season we’re in, wherever we are on the continuum from discombobulation to recombobulation (or maybe a new kind of combobulation), we are in the presence of our God who meets us in our pain and suffering and remains with us in all phases of the winding journey of healing in our lives.

Think About... *(select one or more questions)*

- What did you notice in the reflection? What stood out for you?
- What does it look like to hold recombobulation space for another?
- What does it look like to hold recombobulation space for ourselves? What helps you through those times?
- When has someone helped you find your way through a difficult time? What did they do that was helpful?
- When you’ve been in a difficult time, how has your faith been part of the journey for you? If so, in what ways?

- How could Incarnation serve as a recombobulation area? What would that mean to you or others? What would it look like to serve as a space for people to regroup?
- It can be difficult to admit that we need recombobulation. What keeps us from feeling that recombobulation is ok? What can help us to work through those barriers?
- What have you learned from times when you (or others) were tossed off course and needed to find your way again?
- How does walking with others through recombobulation vary depending on the person or situation?
- What Bible stories or texts or music give you hope or comfort?

Take Away *(for individual or group action & reflection)*

- Pray through the prayer concerns list. The list is in the worship email from Incarnation that arrives on Saturdays. It is also listed in the monthly Lifetimes newsletter email.
- Send a note of encouragement to someone who could use care and support.
- Think about the people around you who are in difficult times. What is something you could do to provide practical help? What might help them feel less isolated and alone? What is something you could do that would be a stretch for you? What would help you take that next step?
- Those around us may be experiencing life concerns that are invisible to us. Next time an interaction leaves you frustrated, unsettled or concerned, ask yourself: What hurt or change might be disrupting their life and impacting their words or actions? How does this change my perception of the situation?

As We Leave Today...

If you are experiencing a difficult time, please practice intentional self-compassion and self-care in this time and as you leave this session. Be intentional in asking for support from a trusted friend or professional listener (counselor, spiritual director, pastor, medical professional...) as it is helpful for you in this time. Incarnation pastors are available to talk with you and/or provide referrals to other places of support.

Road Trip Playlist – *When Peace Like a River, ELW #785*

When peace like a river attendeth
my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught
me to say,
it is well, it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul, it is well, it
is well with my soul.

As part of the group or on your own, read this hymn and a short reflection by Amy Maakestad and listen to a recording.

Blessing *(share information about the next gathering)*

Love one another with mutual affection;
outdo one another in showing honor.

Contribute to the needs of the saints;
pursue hospitality to strangers.

Rejoice with those who rejoice;
weep with those who weep.

-Selections from Romans 12: 10-15 (NRSVUE)

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A Jesus' Shaped Vision for Life

Session 4: Finding a Map when Feeling Lost

Road Trip Playlist

When Peace Like a River (ELW #785)

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
it is well, it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed his own blood for my soul.
It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

He lives- oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

Lord, hasten the day when our faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;
Even so it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

Text: Horatio G. Spafford
Tune: VILLE DU HAVRE, Philip P. Bliss

Listen to Hymn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0>

Search YouTube: It Is Well With My Soul, Audrey Assad

Listen to Flute and Handbells: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiyeEawtu8M>

Search YouTube: It is Well With My Soul, arr. Cathy Moglebust

Playlist Notes

Writer: Amy Maakestad

"In 1873, after his wife was saved but his four daughters died at sea on the French liner *Ville du Havre*, Horatio G. Spafford wrote 'When peace like a river.' This is peace born of grief." (Hymnal Companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship. © 2010 Augsburg Fortress)

Even when we don't understand why bad things happen, there is still a need to confess our faith in God's care. Have you ever been asked to sing this when things weren't at all well with your soul and singing proved impossible? This is why, as a church, we sing in community: the voices that are unable to sing are lifted up by those who can.

The YouTube version of this hymn for handbells and flute (link above) spends most of its time in a place of despair. It is not well. There is a struggle of faith before acceptance prevails.