

Good Trouble

Scripture: John 20:1 – 18, John 8:1 – 11, and Amos 5:10 – 24

4/24/22

In our scripture reading from the Gospel of John 20:1 – 18 we hear the resurrection story. When you look at this version of the resurrection story, not everybody who approached the empty tomb will go in! Some will get close enough to see inside, but not be willing to go inside. They just want to lean into the tomb! Others will wait in fear outside of the empty tomb. They are unsure of what will happen if they take another step into the tomb. Still others will witness the miracle and refuse to get a closer look.

This is what happened on the day Christ was resurrected. There were two disciples running to the grave but only one went in! Although John reached the site first, it was Peter who entered first while John stood on the outside. We can only speculate the reason for John's hesitation, but we know that something kept him from leaning in.

There is a chance that some of you have taken your Lenten journey and have yet to lean in. Perhaps, like John, there is something keeping you from getting a closer look. There may be vestiges of baggage you have yet to let go of. There may be a fear that keeps you from going into the empty tomb and all you can do is lean into the tomb. There may still be a pain unresolved that holds you back from going into the tomb. All you can do is lean into the tomb. There may be wounds yet to be healed or doubts that persist in your mind that the best you can do is lean into the tomb.

You may not know what it is that is holding you back but if you are standing by the empty tomb, you still have hope. May you lean into the tomb!

We may not know what it is that is holding us back but if we are standing by the empty tomb, we still have hope. Let us lean into the tomb!

John may have resisted at first, but he remained long enough to make a new choice. After seeing Peter enter, John finally decided it was time to go into the tomb. At a certain point, John made the decision that leaning in was more important than holding on.

Oh, we may resisted at first, but we must make a new choice. We must finally decide that it is time to go into the tomb. At a certain point, we must make the decision that leaning in is more important than holding on.

There is nothing more important than experiencing Jesus! Nothing we hold compares to what we can have in Christ! When we lean in to witness the resurrection, we experience the power that now lives within us. If we wait outside, we could miss our hope and deny what God has invested in us.

So, let us take the leap! Let us make the choice and let us lean into the reality of the Risen Savior. Let us experience the gift of immeasurable grace!

Ok, Easter is over so what do we do next? What is next? How about we get into 'good trouble'!

As I child, I got into what I thought was 'good trouble'. My parents thought otherwise! As a teen, I just got into just - trouble. I do not remember it as 'good trouble'. I was a rebellious young boy who always seemed to get into trouble, not 'good trouble'. And as an adult, I got into trouble, I think it is 'good trouble'.

John Lewis, an American Congressman and civil rights leader who died in 2020 got into a lot of 'good trouble'. In 1965, John Lewis marched with Martin Luther King Jr. who got into a LOT of 'good trouble' himself to secure voting rights for black citizens. During the march, John Lewis suffered a cracked skull when hit by a baseball bat swung by a racist white man opposing the march. The baseball bat caused a scar on his head which he carried with him for the rest of his life.

John which often say this – When you see something that is not right, not just, and not fair; you have a moral obligation to say something and to do something. Never, ever, be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble!

John Lewis learned early in his life that doing what was right was good trouble. John learned that being faithful to the truth is good trouble. John would speak to things that were not popular but just – good trouble. The other saying John Lewis would say in Congress was that we are better than this!

Jesus got into a lot of good trouble. When Jesus stopped the people from stoning a woman accused of adultery. He got into good trouble!

The Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus to test him. They tell Jesus she was just caught in the very act of adultery and the Law of Moses says she should be stoned. Jesus seems to be ignoring them when he bends down and writes with his finger in the ground. They keep questioning Jesus so Jesus stands straight up and challenges the accuser and the Scribes and the Pharisees by saying – *‘Let the one who is without sin, cast the first stone at her!’* The accuser and Scribes and Pharisees depart realizing not one of them is without sin either. Jesus is left alone with the woman and he asked her if anyone has condemned her and she says no. Then Jesus says to her – *‘I do not condemn you also, go and sin no more!’*

A faith in Jesus Christ calls us to get into good trouble! So have you gotten into good trouble?

We often shy away from making good trouble. We try to play it safe, no one wants trouble. We stay within our comfort zone, no one wants trouble. We keep quiet even when injustice is right in front of us. But we are called to get into good trouble. Let us seek to get into good trouble!

In our scripture reading from the prophet Amos, we hear about good trouble! Amos got into good trouble. Amos saw Israel committing sins and injustices and he could not keep quiet! Amos denounced how the powerful were oppressing the innocent and taking bribes and depriving the poor of justice in the courts while they were building stone mansions with lush vineyards. They were doing this rather than maintaining the safety and comforting those in need.

Amos named the evil. He got into good trouble. He got into necessary trouble.

This trouble aimed at something good which was justice for all.
Amos said – *Let justice roll on like a river!*

So what is 'good trouble'? Good trouble is trouble seeking righteousness and justice. Good trouble is trouble seeking peace and unity. And good trouble is trouble seeking love and compassion. Good trouble is non-violent and at times is very hard to seek.

So today's questions are: Where do you think the Holy Spirit might be prompting you to make some good trouble? And how can you discern the godly way to do good trouble from the ungodly?

The godly way speak with truth and often is not the loudest voice in the room. The godly way leads us to unity, not division. The godly way seek just for all! Let us get into good trouble!

Let us pray:

Precious Lord, take our hands and lead us into the evidence of resurrection. Help us to believe in the emptiness of the tomb. May our path forward be better than anything we are leaving behind. Let us lean into the tomb.

Heavenly Father, if we are left to ourselves, we are likely to play it safe. We are likely stay comfortable, and keep quiet. But we know that you are asking each one of us to do something different. Let us get into good trouble. Help us discern what to do to honor you.

AMEN.