

## **Psych Safety Introductory Comments**

In the letter to the church at Corinth, along with an emphasis on being many members of one body, Paul stresses that you can have amazing gifts given by the Spirit, but if they come without love, they lose their value. As a human, my hubris can deceive me into thinking, believing that my importance, my deeply held values, my brilliance can somehow outweigh love.

Paul advocates for ‘pursuing love AND striving for spiritual gifts.’ They are intended to go together, to be held together.

The following words from Paul are so familiar to us. We hear them at weddings...which is so appropriate, since married couples can really preach it to each other! I am mindful of this since, having been widowed in 2014 I am getting married this coming August! Tom and I are planning a wedding and the balance of sharing brilliance and loving above all things is on my mind!

So, we all need to be reminded of these words: “Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we only know in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.” 1 Cor. 10

Imagine the complete! As we do when we pray for the kingdom to come!

Paul is trying to help the community at Corinth to remember who they are; at their heart. They are one body, beloved of Christ, belonging to one another, in Christ’s love.

For Paul, love and belonging go together, just like love and spiritual gifts go together. To love is to belong to one another and to belong to one another is to love – even with deep differences in the mix.

Brene Brown in “the Gifts of Imperfection” talks about how she pairs love and belonging because in her research, when someone spoke of love, they also *always* spoke of belonging. I imagine that we know how those Corinthians felt, being in conflict with their own hearts.

Brown notes, “We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that grows from offering that with trust, respect, kindness and affection...And...belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us...and it only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world...”

Brown, “The Gifts of Imperfection”, Page 34-35, Hazelden, Center City, MI 2010,

2020

So we gather today words from our beloved Apostle Paul who can seem so off and right at the same time, the most famous shame researcher of our generation who happens to be an Episcopalian, and the academic study of psychological safety – and they are all saying the same thing. In order to cultivate love, which is the call of the gospel, involves creating safe space for one another to be able to present our

authentic, imperfect selves, and honor our spiritual connection which grows when we practice trust, respect, kindness and affection.

It is good for us and good for organizations to live into and to intentionally cultivate love and belonging. It will help you heal and thrive and show up as really good church.

For the lunchtime conversation we are inviting you to explore this relationship between love and belonging, psychological safety.

The stages of psychological safety are on the screen:

*Inclusion* safety – do you feel safe to belong?

*Learner* safety – can you learn in this space through asking questions, experimenting? Can you make mistakes?

*Contributor* Safety – can you contribute ideas without fear or embarrassment?

*Challenger* safety – can you question others, including those in authority?

The questions that we invite you to discuss during your lunch break are based on these definitions, but I want to take a minute to discuss the framing that comes before the questions:

“Consider a *meaningful* experience you have had in the diocese.”

Meaningful is a neutral word. It could bring something to mind that is positive, or, might be negative, or even neutral. It could be about the current conflict or something from another time in your life here. It could be traumatic, or, it could be something really beautiful that you experienced in this Diocese of Florida. The point is to share how it contributed to your sense of belonging and love in this Christian community – or the lack of it.

The questions do continue in a positive direction, essentially focusing attention on what good do you want to see continue and how can you be part of that good? Even negative experiences can prompt us to grow toward positive change.

So right after our blessing of the food and the gift of this time together, we invite you into fellowship and conversation, slowing down to the speed of reverence as you eat, listen and share.

Lunches are on the table and you are free to eat and have your conversation wherever you wish being mindful of our return time to this room; you can be outside or at your tables. Choose a facilitator and please remember to share your feedback. The committee that is planning these convocations has become a learning community, and you are our teachers today. We want to hear you. So, thank you.

*Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves*