



Reflection for April 28, 2021

By Kate Croskery Jones



“Stand in the middle where healing happens”

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

“No one, sir,” she said. John 8:1-11 (NIV)

I don't always watch the Oscars, but on Sunday, Tyler Perry's acceptance speech, which

was a sermon of a sort, got a standing ovation. Viola Davis presented Tyler Perry with the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. Perry admonished us to refuse hate and ended with the blessing. As part of refusing hate he urged us to “stand in the middle where healing happens.” He said,

“... it’s in the middle where things change so I’m hoping that that inspires people to meet us in the middle so that we can get back to some semblance of normal as this pandemic is over we can all get to a place where we’re showing love and kindness to each other again.”

The story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery is a kind of “standing in the middle.” It is not the failure to take a position but rather not allowing your position to judge or condemn and to remember that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory.” Perry told the story of seeing a shoeless, homeless woman approaching him. His first inclination was to pull out some money and send her on her way. She asked him if he had any shoes. Standing outside a warehouse full of costumes, and remembering that he had once been homeless, Perry invited her in and found shoes that fit her feet. He reported that her response was “Thank you, Jesus.” Oh, that we all could stand in the middle, hear the need of the other and respond to the needs of Other rather than to our own preconceived notions of “Other.” Jesus saw that the woman did not need condemnation. Perry saw that the woman needed shoes. Her response was gratitude.

What will you see when you stand in the middle? How will you respond?

Please pray with me: *Lord, Jesus you know how easy it is for us to take sides and defend our view at the expense of others. Help us to stand in the middle with open hearts, open eyes, and open ears that we may see, hear, and respond as you would have us respond. Help us to build relationships and not resentments. Amen.*