

LIVING IT OUT

SESSION 5 DROP THE WEIGHTS!

When I was sixteen, I went through training to become a senior lifeguard. The teacher and the three other students were 21 year-old male friends of my brother. My being paired with the largest one of them who was always extremely resistant to being “saved” during rescue exercises brought them all great glee and made me even more determined to do as good or better than everyone of them.

Toward the end of a grueling class one day, we each were to retrieve weights from the bottom of the pool and carry them back and forth across the pool three times. When I was almost back for the third time, the weights became too much and I went under momentarily.

The instructor yelled from the side, Drop the weights!” There was no way I was going to give them this satisfaction. Down I went again. “Drop the weights!” There was no way I was going to lose face with these men; no way I was going to fail. Close enough to almost touch the edge of the pool if I didn’t have the weights in my hand, I started the decent for the third time. For an instant, it seemed easier to hold on to something that could bring my death than face the threats, real or perceived, in life. In the midst of practicing to save others’ lives, I had a decision to make about my own. Would I cling to pieces of metal in order to make a point? Would I hold on to something worthless so I would not be deemed inadequate or less than?

I dropped those weights; made it to the side of the pool; and this event has been a metaphor I have revisited throughout my life. Often we are faced with life and death and for a time we choose death. We cling to weights that are worthless believing they allow us to “save face” or “fit in.” We cling to that which is familiar, but is not life giving.

Wisdom threatens us with life and whispers such questions and invitations to us as that subversive Galilean rabbi uttered: “Do you want to be made well?” “Sell all you have, give it to the poor, come and follow me.”

For Your Spiritual Journal:

How does Christ threaten your life or threaten you with life?

When is it easier to cling to that which is not life giving instead of reach out to that which is?

Drop the Weights!

When do you hold fast to that which seems to bring you comfort, security, and/or status and are not willing to open your life, heart, resources to those who are struggling?

You may also want to read *Threatened by Resurrection: Prayers and Poems from an Exiled Guatemalan* by Julia Esquivel.

Prayer

God of the manger and the marginalized, you have given us a precious gift in the life of Jesus. May we get into the Stories and discover the raw, nourishing and challenging truths. May we experience them in such a way that they become real to us and expressed in our lives. Hesitantly and hopefully we pray. Amen.

-- Cynthia Langston Kirk

