



The Mirror

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Is COVID 19 like the 10 plagues in Exodus or the ones mentioned in Revelation? And, what about all the violence in the Bible, the slaughters, the wars, the floods, the apocalypse? What are we to do with those stories? You may have heard me say, the Bible is a mirror, it reflects our own image, it shines our own selves and our own world back to us. A mirror, of course, is a reflecting glass that does not lie. It tells you the truth as you see yourself in it. It makes you see yourself as you are.

The Bible is also, generally, in the word of Peter Gomes, descriptive rather than prescriptive. Many think that the Bible is a prescription on how to live. If that were the case we would not be so confused about its interpretation. We would simply take its content as prescription and live by it. However, that is not the case. The Biblical story is more complex. It is descriptive as it describes what we and the world around us look like, inviting us to see ourselves in the mirror it holds for us.

The Biblical story is a human faith story that describes the struggle of walking in covenant and in trust with the One who has created us, loves us, holds and heals us. It is the story of a journey of ups and downs, of a relationship between God and the people, who no matter how committed to their God, God's realm, lose their way every now and then. The best way for them to discover their detour? To hold up a mirror so they can see the truth for themselves.

Perhaps that is why the Bible is a story, a collection of stories, because stories themselves are mirrors that invite us to see ourselves in them. Hence, they do not always call us to go and do the same, but sometimes they call us to be horrified by the truths we see – our own human ability to hurt and destroy one another, to abuse

and kill our neighbor. They call us to awaken us to the violence we do to one another, because often left to our own we'd rather evade and ignore. They help us be aware of the anguish and the bloodshed around us lest we forget and become negligent in our call to heal the world make it more like

I sometimes wonder if violence in stories, art, film, rap, even Shakespeare, serves as a tool to help us see our own selves, who we are, and to recognize the complexity of human life as well as its frailty. Perhaps those disturbing stories and images move us in such a way that seeing the true picture of self and world we gain clearer perspective, wisdom and compassion.

COVID 19 is not a punishment from God nor is it an extraordinary phenomenon. Throughout history, periodically, viruses have caused pandemics such as the Athens Plague, Antonine Plague, The American Plagues of 16th century, the Spanish Flu, etc... What I find interesting about the current pandemic is that we, as a global humanity were totally unprepared for it. Why were scientists and governments unable to foresee it and prepare for it?

What mirror is COVID 19 holding up for us? What truth do we see when we look into its mirror? Many of us are not wanting to look into this mirror. We don't want to know its truth or feel its pain. We are busying, distracting ourselves, jamming our calendars with zoom meetings, worrying about when to open church buildings, hence missing its call to slow down, to care for our own broken hearts, for one another's pain, tending to the broken spirits and bodies of our world. Let's stop worrying about things we cannot change and live in the moment to find some Sabbath rest and healing.