

Faith, Sexism, Justice - Conversations toward a Social Statement on Women and Justice

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Scripture Sources:

Luke 13:34-35 - "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing."

Psalm 22

Isaiah 49:14-16a

Sermon Props: a little toy chick and a fashion magazine

I want to be a chick gathered to God like a hen gathers her chicks.

Growing up I was told by my parents that "I could be whatever I wanted to be." I thought that was great, but I was still unsure because all I saw were males in leadership positions like - principals of my schools, ministers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, elected officials, managers, construction workers, police officers, fire fighters, biologist, chemist, etc.

When I grew up I realized that I could enter a male dominated profession, but I would be paid less than my male colleagues and I wouldn't be as respected as males.

I saw this as disturbing because 1. What my parents said was untrue 2. What Jesus taught didn't agree what I saw as common, accepted practice in the world.

It was at that time that I welcomed being a little chick gathered to Jesus. I knew I needed the power and love of God.

Jesus modeled a way of justice for all people by telling:

1. The story of the Good Samaritan
2. The woman with the lost coin
3. The woman at the well
4. The woman caught in adultery
5. By turning over the tables in the temple because the poor people were being

cheated by the money changers.

Justice for all people has not been a value in our world. We have gotten complacent about the plight of all women while the poor get poorer and the rich get richer.

ELCA Social Statement on Women and Justice

Latina Women – make .56 for every \$1.00 a white man makes
Black Women - make .64 for every \$1.00 a white man makes
White women - make .82 for every \$1.00 a white man makes

For those of us who are wealthy, who have jobs or retirement or who are partnered with a wealthy male spouse this may not seem like it affects you. But for women who are widows, divorced or single and for women of color these statistics have created massive poverty.

Our situation reminds me of how the Egyptian Pharaoh acted when the Israelite population in the region was growing. Pharaoh gave the men impossible work loads then told the midwives to kill the male babies to keep the Israelites from having war with Pharaoh.

It seems like people have learned from Pharaoh how to keep people down.

Some individual males and male dominated systems in power in this country and around the world actively work to keep women “in their place” by beating them, raping them and paying them lower wages so that women will be easily manipulated and ruled. The physical and psychological effects of violence and injustice against women are huge. It is hard to fight back and to stand tall when you are beaten down so severely.

There are many things that keep women in poverty and not being successful:

1. We keep women as victims –

Domestic violence – National Domestic violence Hotline

1 in 4 (24.3%) women aged 18 and older in the US have been victims of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

On average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by a intimate partner in the US - more than 12 million women and men in a year.

2. Magazines and commercials show women and girls that they need to look like models (in magazines the models are touched up so the model doesn't even look like the picture). Women hurt themselves by trying to look like a model and by buying these magazines that perpetuate injustice. (Ex. Vogue magazine - 113 pages with only 25 pages of articles)

Women sabotage themselves by buying these magazines.

3. If you are a female leader there is pressure to do much better than a male in the same position to be considered equal to a male colleague.

Jesus would have nothing good to say about the injustices that women experience.

Plenty of women have said, "My God, my god why have you forsaken me? It is as if we are the Jerusalem that Jesus mourned when he said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it." (Luke 13)

This is a statement of grief from Jesus. When he gets to the Garden of Gethsemane he looks up to Jerusalem on the hill and prayed 3 times,

"My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

I want to be a chick gathered under the loving wings of God.

What is our faithful response?

1. We listen to the cries of those who are hurting – weep with them. **This is hard because listening changes us. Listening to others makes them feel heard and that changes them.
2. We speak out against injustice
3. We show up and stand with those who are fighting for their livelihoods, their health care, for jobs that pay a living wage or education and for safety.
4. Work for change in laws, atmosphere of our workplaces
5. We can confess our wrongs and we can ask others and God for forgiveness.

Where does our hope come from?

1. Psalm 22 – God hears our cries – vs. 24
2. Creating coalitions of people who work together for justice

We live in gratitude for our God who sent a son who suffered and died and rose again. We are able to rejoice in the power of God's love for us and the gift of forgiveness.

We die to our sin each day and are reborn, to gather in God's compassion and love like a hen gathers her chicks around her.

I want to be a chick.

I am a chick.

You are a chick.

AMEN

RESOURCE for this sermon

Christ chose the common chicken for his metaphor because of the hen's selfless devotion to its chicks. Allis-Pike explained that a chicken is almost defenseless, yet it will never abandon its offspring when danger arises. It also is an active mother and will gather its offspring together to protect them. If necessary it will shield its little chicks with its own body — offering itself to preserve their lives.

To the hen, its chicks are valued greatly. It actively will call to them. "Perhaps the most important point about the chicks in this metaphor is what is assumed. These chickens obey instinct. They come to their mother ... this means that when the hen calls they come without hesitation, without delay and without question run to the safety that is only found underneath their mother's wings," Allis-Pike said.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705382197/Christ's-beautiful-metaphor-of-the-hen.html>