

We are all feeling that things are off center

Jan named it as we gathered last Sunday in our Meeting for Business

She invited us to pause and take some time to center

Others of you have reported feeling off

It presents itself as a political problem, whether it be governmental action or natural disasters

As your pastor, normally I leave political questions to your own conscience

However, what is plaguing us now is not just political

It is actually bigger than that and really global in its impact

Some feel it in their bodies,

some are sick,

some are feeling it in their emotions,

some are overwhelmed with the news,

some find that they are distracted,

some feel as if everything is harder than usual, etc

I think it is really affecting all of us

To say this is just a political reaction is to miss what's happening

This is a spiritual problem—evil has been given a new permission to cause chaos

To call it political, minimizes the truth of what's happening and leaves us defenseless

It is a deep spiritual assault upon God and the nature of Jesus

It is a deep spiritual assault upon what it means to be faithful, spiritual followers

That's why it is so important that the church speak out and act, why we sent out the statement...

We reject the use of Jesus for a nationalist agenda. We affirm the separation of church and state. Christ's Presence in our world is evidenced by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To *these* values we are committed. North Seattle Friends Church October 2017

But most of us are not very experienced at knowing how to deal with this kind of assault

Some of us just give in to what's happening

I tend to push it all aside, put my head down and plod along

I challenge us to consider how to live and bring Light into this darkness

We know that light overcomes the darkness—Lots of scripture and teaching says it is true!

John 1:5 - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Luke 1:78-79 - By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

John 8:12 - Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

1 John 1:5 - This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

George Fox – "I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness." Journal of George Fox, page 19

But when you are standing in the darkness and can't see the light, what do we do?

The darkness closes in and it is easy to panic and lose our way

It is disorienting

No wonder we are feeling off center

Spiritual darkness throws us off kilter and completely messes with us

This is bigger than a political problem—even though it masquerades as a political problem

When the power goes out in my home—

First thing I do is get my large flashlight which lives in a clamp on the wall in the laundry room

I always know where it is and how to find it

There is a kerosene lamp on top of my piano and the matches are right behind the TV,
near the fireplace

What are the tools that are useful to us in spiritual darkness?

Like finding the flashlight, kerosene lamp and matches—I'm going to start with 3 basic tools

We will continue this journey and explore other tools next week

- Tell the truth about the situation

This is the place to begin—God can only work when we tell the truth about the situation

Be honest with how bad it is, how inadequate you feel,

Lay it all out on the table, naming each piece as you put it on the table

Don't try to resolve it or solve the puzzle—just name the truth

Then wait—let God Lead us in the next steps

It's God's job to put the puzzle together—but we usually try to do it for God

When a new piece comes to mind, add it to those on the table

Do this literally if it helps

- We are enough—I forget this in the darkness and I feel like it is hopeless

Why shunting it all to a political issue leaves me empty—it feels like my vote is useless

2 Cor. 12:9 "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."

Phil. 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Luke 9:12-17 The feeding of 5000 with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish

Thomas Kelley—when you slip, don't fret. Simply turn and begin again

We are enough! We are enough to do everything God asks us to do!

We aren't enough to do it all

However, it is the absolute truth that we are enough to do that which is ours to do!

- Fear not!

This has been our lesson—we don't have to live afraid because we Trust God

In fact, we refuse to live afraid because we Trust God

It is the message time and again from God and the angels—Fear not!—then...

Isaiah 41:13 For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I will help you."

Romans 8:37-39 In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.