

The Other Side

The Other Side -- A Modern Day Parable

Inspired by Mark 1:21-28

Picture a remote land, one unlike any you or I have ever seen before. It is lush with greenery, tall trees, fields of colorful flowers, and springs of fresh, clear water. You can breathe here. You can feel here. This is such a life-giving space. It seems to be the very center of perfect peace. Surely only goodness and light radiate from here.

The people who live in this land don't look like you and me. They have unique characteristics, unique customs, unique dress. Observe them carrying out their daily rituals of morning praise, food preparation, dance and celebration. All is shared. There is an elderly ruler of this tribe, and all seem to accept his authority. None question it. They are content with their routine.

Now, let us take flight, like a majestic bird, and soar over this beautiful land to the other side of the island. These fields are mostly bare. The crops have been neglected, the streams are littered, the trees have been chopped and stripped of the lush greenery. These people do not rise to sing their praises. They do not gather to worship their creator. They do not sing and dance in harmony. Rather, they bicker and take from one another.

One stands out as the most important, but it appears his authority is self-imposed and the people respond out of fear. Today is a turning point day. It seems the food supply is critically low, and something must be done or they will not survive.

Two of the youngest members from each tribe have been secretly meeting to play together in the middle of the forest that separates the tribes. The young girl from the thriving side brings food and supplies to her young friend to help their family. She had asked the elder leader if they might share and teach the other side how to live as they do. He dismissed the young girl saying, they will not change. We deserve what we have, and they deserve what they have made for themselves. He wasn't interested in listening to her plan. He didn't understand her love and care for the other side.

The time came for the annual celebration when the people of both sides gather at the top of the hill on the center of the island. When night came, the young girl entered the sacred circle and began to teach a plan to save the island, to erase division, to end hunger.....in other words to bring equality to the whole land that all may thrive for she knew the people of her friend's tribe were being oppressed by their ruler.

And, she knew there was enough for everyone. Why would they not work together for the good of all? The people were astonished at her wisdom for she taught as one having authority and not as the children.

In the crowd was the bully ruler with a selfish spirit; he cried out, "What have you to do with us, young one? Haven't you come to destroy us? Do you wish to make us your slaves? I know who you are -- the leader of a new generation! The young girl looked at him with kindness and said, "Come out of your old ways and see with new eyes. Life has been hard for you and your people. Let us sit and talk and learn from each other." Tears began to stream down the man's face, and as he cried the years of pain and fear and regret came out of him.

All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority from such a young one. She speaks with love and even the hardest hearts hear and respond." Peace began to spread everywhere throughout the whole island.