



## ***Spin a Yarn***

October 16, 2022

*John 13: 34-35*

### Connect:

Think about someone's story or episode that you know so well and have retold. When and where do you remember first hearing their story? Did you reciprocate with a story of your own? If not, did it offer hints of your own story?

### Engage

- Read *John 13:34-35*. This loved and so often told part of the Christian commission is “all that easy and all that hard.” Curiously, this mention of the *great commandment* does not mention the “as you love yourself that Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31 do. Is this an invitation for us to think about our best listening gifts? The best way to honor someone else's story doesn't always need to relate back to our own. Most good stories do cause pause for us to make the connection to our own lives. Yet we wonder if sometimes we need to just do the “active listening” that coaches us to repeat part of the story being told in order to gently seek clarification, suspend judgment or disentangle our own experiences, assumptions and anxieties( *You Need To Get Out More* p. 71).
- You have a story. It's worth telling. Maybe it is about the memory of your “furthest back person”. It's about a character, who wants something. It's about a character who has gone through conflict to get what they want. It's about a character who has experienced transformation as a result of the conflict. Can you share such a story in your group? Do you see how this sharing can take us out of our own limited worlds, and reveal to us an understanding of our connectedness to others, our purpose and God's reign? (*YNTG Out More* p. 60)
- If we can begin to name the need for relationships in our lives as we emerge from this season of threat and isolation, we can be intentional about finding the invitation to hear and connect through shared stories. Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, heard the entire plot line of the Pulitzer Prize winning book while sitting on the front porch of his grandparents' home listening to his maternal grandmother tell stories. It inspired Haley to research his ancestry and write the novel that changed an entire generation and our

understanding of the history of our nation, the plight of a people and the evils of slavery. It all began with a story. Can you imagine a porch, table, elevator...where your story could inspire?

- Some voices have been silenced and unearthed. The story of Mary Magdalene, didn't fit and even threatened the formation of church that could not elevate a woman's power, credibility and voice and still maintain the patriarchal need for control. Andrew called Mary's revelations *strange* and Peter asked *why would Jesus only have told you, a woman?* While Levi admonished them for treating a woman as they do their adversaries. How might our faith expressions be different today, if women's voices had been honored? Are there examples of oppression or healing in your storied witness?

### Next Steps:

- You need to get out more this week! Get a story together. You may already have longed to write it down. Make an appointment to richly exchange stories with another. As you move through your days this week, write down anything you heard that inspires or reflects God's good work around us. Take heart in this story and keep listening.
- Look at your red yarn, if you missed it, imagine it on your wrist or string one together. Let it remind you, until it falls away. It is the connecting love, life line, story and presence that we all share as beloved ones of The Good. Who can you love better because you are first loved to Goodness? What does the shared symbol say about us as disciples and our love for one another? You are a gospel.

### Pray:

- Share joys and concerns about the story you are living now with your group. Lift those in prayer.
- Pray encouragement for yourself and our church to spill and gather stories that embolden our witness and witness.
- *“Lord, help me to listen for and share a story the bears witness to sacred presence that sustains us. In the exchange, embolden me to be a better listener and connector. Help me to lift another's story in honor and gratitude. Amen*