

SESSION THREE // The Ultimate Embrace with Bishop Mano Rumalshah

Watch Film

<http://www.theworkofthepeople.com/the-ultimate-embrace>

Going Deeper

How do you see the abuse of the divine by Christians at large? In your church community? In yourself?

Where do you see Christians embracing one another across divides? Where do you see Christians opening arms to non-Christians “peacefully, with love and care”?

What is your imagining of an ultimate embrace? What do you think God’s imagining of an ultimate embrace could be?

Do you have friends who are non-Christian, or are Christian but with different beliefs than you? How do you show respect for their belief as people of faith?

Spend some still time contemplating and connecting to God’s Love. What does Love compel you to do? Before you go to the next thing, write it down. Find a creative way of expressing it as a reminder to yourself.

Reflection

The test of your love is its compulsion. God did not have mercy or pity on us humans in entering humanity, it was the compulsion of His love.—Bishop Mano Rumalshah

This world resists that which it should embrace, and embraces that which it should resist. We bring close to us things that make us feel substantiated, qualified, and safe. We have monuments of trash to prove that when things no longer serve these purposes they are removed, discarded, and kept out of plain sight.

It’s hard to imagine, but humans do this with other humans as well, me included. I have run marathon distances to get far away from those who have hurt me, those I had been raised to fear because of bias, or those who I am afraid to confront. Those who I perceive to be greatly different than me or I believe will think I am too far out or different from them. I have hid my truest self from people I worked for and with, afraid to be misunderstood and therefore judged uneducated or foolish.

In fact, each time I am honored to write for Travis at TWOTP, the thought crosses my mind that I won't be deep enough, relevant enough, or...enough. I resist the reader without even knowing who's holding these words or what they have been through. Eventually, I surrender myself and just offer stories of new life that I have experienced...because that is what I have. A life course, just like yours, where flowers grow through the cracks, skies clear, and fresh winds dry tears of anxiety over the possibility of rejection.

I end up writing because I can't not write. I can't not reach for communion at the table with you.

The compulsion of Love and presence drives me to risk myself while extending beyond myself. I risk being inclusive, hanging around town with all the wrong people, standing with peace and integrity in the face of drama because I am compelled to stand in the places where God sends me and to be with the people God wants to touch.

I am not, by any means, beyond the fears of a negative self-image, but I do find that being a willing conductor of God's Love and Image is manna to my soul, and is what becomes lasting to those welcomed who are usually scrapping for crumbs while many of us are discussing theological controversy over coffee.

Love compels me to go beyond myself to others, and I can't not go. I can't not touch. I can't not extend healing even though I am assuredly NOT enough. I show up trusting God to be ahead of, hovering over, and alive within me seeking Godself alive and well within the person before me. I show up to give and receive the ultimate embrace of acceptance and inclusion.

If, as Bishop Rumlshah says, the test of our Love is compulsion, what do you not have a choice but to do? Who do you not have a choice but to hold? Please go and do it, please go with all of my encouragement and blessing, and hope for the healing of the world.