

The Work of the People's

## A Hidden Wholeness

Practicing Hospitality, Grace, and Hope in Divided Times

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### SERIES INTRO

In a world often marked by division, fear, and uncertainty, this series invites you into a journey of rediscovery—a journey toward a deeper connection with God, yourself, and others. Through the wisdom and reflections of Parker Palmer, these four sessions explore themes of hospitality, grace, and hope as pathways to wholeness in our lives and communities.

Together, we will consider:

- How welcoming the stranger transforms not only the other but also ourselves.
- The small, faithful habits that sustain hope amid life's challenges.
- The creation of spaces where grace and connection can flourish, fostering healing and trust.
- The paradox of wholeness, where holding the tensions of life with love expands our capacity for compassion and renewal.

This series invites you to slow down, reflect deeply, and engage with both heart and mind. You will be encouraged to notice what stirs within you, to explore how these themes intersect with your own life, and to respond to the Spirit's gentle nudging toward growth and transformation.

Whether you're joining this series as part of a group or on your own, consider these sessions as a sacred space—a space to receive wisdom, share insights, and participate in practices that help bring forth new realities of love, grace, and connection.

As you begin this journey, may you carry with you the assurance that you are deeply loved, intricately connected to others, and uniquely invited to help co-create a world that reflects the heart of God.

Let's begin.

## SERIES SESSIONS

*Click on session titles to navigate to the beginning of the session.*

1. [A Larger Welcome](#)  
The Transformative Power of Hospitality
2. [Habits of Hope](#)  
Cultivating Practices for Resilience and Connection
3. [Spaces of Grace](#)  
Creating Environments for Healing and Connection
4. [Hospitality and Wholeness](#)  
Holding Life's Tensions to Foster Connection and Compassion

*Click on the link below to visit the film series homepage on The Work of the People.*

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/film-series/a-hidden-wholeness>

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## AUTHOR BIO

### PARKER PALMER

Parker J. Palmer is an American author, educator, and activist who focuses on issues in education, community, leadership, spirituality and social change. He has published ten books and numerous essays and poems, and is founder and Senior Partner Emeritus of the Center for Courage and Renewal.[1] His work has been recognized with major foundation grants, several national awards, and thirteen honorary doctorates.

**TWOTP Author Page:**

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/person/parker-palmer>

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## GUIDE NOTES TO CONSIDER

### Discernment vs. Debate

The Goal of these mini film journeys is to provide space for deep, personal, and communal listening. It's not about agreeing or disagreeing with a speaker but about where we are led.

The focus is on spiritual discernment, not intellectual analysis or doctrinal debate. Healthy wrestling and imagination are encouraged, but determining who's right or wrong doesn't nurture discovery and transformation.

### Deep Listening

Essential for discovery and transformation, prompts throughout the guide will help cultivate awareness and fresh perspectives.

### Spiritual Practices

Engage the suggested series practice provided below here in this intro on your own during the week to stay marinated in the ideas you are exploring through the series..

### Groups

- **Start with Stories:** In a new group, consider having participants share their faith journeys in the first session to build connectedness through vulnerability.
- **Be Present:** Use "I" statements when responding to others and avoid giving unsolicited advice. Focus on "hearing each other into deeper speech."
- **Pre-session Prep:** Encourage participants to engage with the film and discernment questions before the group meets for richer conversations.

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## EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

At the conclusion of each session you will find suggested resources and practices to consider exploring throughout the week to help you carry the session's insights into your daily life. These practices can create sacred rhythms that deepen your understanding, nurture ongoing reflection, and open your heart to transformation. As you engage, you may uncover new layers of meaning, guiding you into deeper relationships with yourself, others, and the Divine.

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## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS & TRANSCRIPTS

*Click on session titles to navigate to the beginning of the video transcript.*

**A Larger Welcome** - This session explores the transformative power of hospitality. Parker Palmer reflects on how welcoming the stranger—both spiritually and civically—deepens our humanity, enlarges our worldview, and strengthens the bonds of community. Drawing from Scripture and lived experience, Palmer invites us to consider hospitality as a radical act of faith and connection.

**Habits of Hope** - In uncertain times, hope is sustained through small, faithful practices. Parker Palmer shares how cultivating habits of the heart fosters resilience and strengthens the fabric of community. This session invites participants to explore how intentional acts of love and courage can bring healing to both individuals and the world.

**Spaces of Grace** - Spaces of grace are environments where safety, trust, and love create the conditions for transformation. Parker Palmer reflects on how such spaces foster healing, nurture connection, and enable people to flourish together. This session offers guidance for cultivating grace-filled spaces in our relationships, communities, and the wider world.

**Wholeness and Hospitality** - Wholeness emerges when we embrace life's tensions with love and compassion. Parker Palmer explores the paradox of brokenness leading to greater capacity for connection, inviting participants to consider how holding tensions with grace can lead to healing and renewal. This session ties together the series' themes, highlighting the relationship between hospitality, healing, and transformation.

# // SESSION ONE //

## A Larger Welcome

### The Transformative Power of Hospitality

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#### WELCOME

Parker Palmer reflects on the profound spiritual and civic implications of welcoming the stranger. Drawing on Scripture and life experiences, he explores how acts of hospitality expand our worldview, deepen our humanity, and transform our communities.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

**Create a Sacred Space:** Light a candle to symbolize openness and connection.

**Reflective Journaling:** Write down thoughts to help internalize and process things more deeply. (Consider journaling your initial thoughts or questions about hospitality and what it means to you)

**Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices:**

- **Judgment:** Creates barriers to connection.
- **Fear:** Prevents openness to the unknown.
- **Cynicism:** Undermines the transformative power of encounter.

#### Centering

Pause and take a deep breath. Ground yourself in the present moment. Open your heart to receive whatever insights or revelations the Spirit may offer during this time.

#### Invocation

Allow your heart to receive these words as you enter into the session:

"Through acts of hospitality to the stranger, we discover a larger view of ourselves, the world, and God's unfolding love."

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

### A Larger Welcome with Parker Palmer (11:21)

- Watch the video [here](#).

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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

After watching the film, reflect on the following prompts. Don't feel pressured to respond to everything; let the Spirit guide your reflections.

- What emotions, sensations, or thoughts did you notice as you listened?
- Did any part of the video stir feelings of discomfort or curiosity?
- How did your body respond—did you feel tension, openness, or something else?
- What story or idea lingers with you and why?
- What feels most alive for you as you consider this session?

**Second Viewing:** *Consider watching the video again to deepen your reflections.*

**A Note to Groups:** *Engage in deeper conversation about how these ideas resonate or challenge your current understanding.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

As you contemplate Suzanne's reflections on polarization and connection, explore the following:

- How does welcoming the stranger challenge or affirm your understanding of faith?
- Palmer describes hospitality as central to democracy and spirituality. How does this resonate with you?

- What fears or assumptions might hold you back from extending welcome to the “other”?
- How does the act of welcoming transform not only the guest but also the host?
- What role does the church play in modeling radical hospitality?

**A Note to Groups:** *Take time here to share deeper explorations with one another.*

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Take a moment to recenter yourself. Reflect on what you’ve heard and felt. Allow the insights from this session to settle into your heart.

Consider/journal these prompts:

“I sense God inviting me to create...”

“I am drawn to explore new beginnings through...”

“I am willing to release...”

“I am open to embracing...”

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## RESTING

Before moving on, rest in the assurance of God’s presence. Release any remaining distractions and allow yourself to simply be held by God’s love.

- Take a deep breath, exhaling slowly.
- Rest in the peace of knowing that you are invited to extend the same welcome to others.

**A Note to Groups:** *Group prayer is a powerful way to affirm and close out a vulnerable time of deep listening with one another. Consider inviting each participant to say a one-word phrase that they are taking with them from this time exploring together. At the conclusion, the leader may wish to say, “May this be our prayer and our practice. Amen.”*

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## CLOSING

Carry the insights and invitations of this session with you into your week. Revisit your journal and reflect on how hospitality can transform your relationship

## Benediction

Allow these words to accompany you as you move from this sacred space into your daily life:

## EXPANDING THE CIRCLE

May you go forth with a heart open to the stranger,  
seeing in them the face of God.

May your life reflect the beauty of radical hospitality,  
expanding the circle of connection and grace.

Go forth in the creative power of Christ,  
held by the One who makes all things new.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Consider exploring these suggested resources and practices throughout the week to help you carry the session's insights into your daily life. These practices can create sacred rhythms that deepen your understanding, nurture ongoing reflection, and open your heart to transformation. As you engage, you may uncover new layers of meaning, guiding you into deeper relationships with yourself, others, and the Divine.

## EXPLORE MORE

Additional resources to consider exploring.

**Book:** [Let Your Life Speak with Parker Palmer](#)

**Book:** [Radical Hospitality by Lonni Collins Pratt and Daniel Homan](#)

**Poetry:** [The Guest House by Rumi](#)

TWOTP Video: [Making Space for Others with Suzanne Stabile](#)

TWOTP Video: [Hospitality and Salvation with Diana Butler Bass](#)

## **SESSION PRACTICES**

A contemplative practice to consider to continue engaging the session's theme.

**Hospitality as a Spiritual Practice** - Practice small acts of intentional welcome this week—whether through a smile, a kind word, or an open invitation. Notice how these gestures change your heart and perspective.

**Lectio Divina Practice** - Read this quote slowly, allowing its meaning to deepen:  
"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." – Hebrews 13:2

**Visio Divina Practice** - Reflect on an image of an open door or a shared table. Allow its symbolism to speak to your heart about creating space for others.

# // SESSION TWO //

## Habits of Hope

### Cultivating Practices for Resilience and Connection

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#### WELCOME

In this session, Parker Palmer reflects on the small, faithful practices that sustain hope amid life's challenges. He discusses how habits of the heart strengthen individual resilience while also empowering communities to build a world rooted in love, courage, and justice.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

Light a candle to symbolize the steady flame of hope. Consider holding a warm drink and focusing on its aroma and warmth as a grounding practice to center yourself.

##### Reflective Journaling

Write down thoughts to help internalize and process things more deeply. (Consider jotting down one habit or practice that has helped you remain hopeful during difficult times).

##### Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** May close the door to hope.
- **Cynicism:** Dismisses the value of small acts..
- **Fear:** Undermines trust in the possibility of change.

##### Centering

Pause, close your eyes, and take several deep breaths. Ground yourself in the present moment. Invite God's Spirit to nurture seeds of hope within you.

##### Invocation

Receive these words from Parker as an invitation:

“Hope grows through small, faithful acts of love and courage, woven into the fabric of community.”

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

### Habits of Hope with Parker Palmer (14:52)

- Watch the video [here](#).
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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

As you reflect on the video, notice what stirs within you. Avoid trying to explain or analyze—simply pay attention to what feels alive.

- What resonated most deeply? A word, phrase, or story?
- What emotions surfaced as you reflected on habits of hope?
- Did you notice any internal resistance or curiosity?
- How does the idea of hope as a practice connect to your life?
- What surprised or challenged your understanding of resilience?

**Second Viewing:** *If you feel called, watch the video again to deepen your reflection*

**A Note to Groups:** *Share your initial observations with one another, focusing on listening to understand.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

Use these questions to explore the session’s themes more fully. Let the Spirit guide your responses.

- Palmer describes hope as cultivated through small acts of love and courage. What practices resonate most with you, and which feel challenging?

- How do you see habits of hope strengthening the fabric of your community?
- Reflect on a time when you experienced hope being sustained by seemingly small or ordinary actions.
- Palmer speaks of the heart “broken open” into greater capacity. How does this idea shape your understanding of resilience?
- In what ways can fostering hope bring healing to a polarized or divided world?

**A Note to Groups:** *Share your deeper reflections with the group, listening with compassion and openness.*

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Take a moment to pause and breathe deeply. Allow the insights and themes of this session to settle into your heart.

Consider/journal these prompts:

“I sense the Spirit inviting me to...”

“I am being drawn toward...”

“I am willing to let go of...”

“I am open to embracing...”

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## RESTING

Before concluding, rest in God’s presence. Release any lingering thoughts or distractions, and allow yourself to simply be.

- Take a deep breath, exhaling slowly.
- Rest in the assurance that you are held in divine love, and that hope continues to grow even in uncertainty.

**A Note to Groups:** *Consider ending with a group prayer or sharing a word or phrase that captures what you’re taking away from this session.*

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## CLOSING

As you move forward, carry the insights of this session with you. Revisit your reflections and consider how small acts of hope can shape your relationships and community.

## Benediction

Allow these words to accompany you as you move from this sacred space into your daily life:

## WEAVING HOPE INTO COMMUNITY

May you go forth with a heart open to hope,  
weaving it into the fabric of your life and relationships.

May your small acts of courage sustain you and those around you.

Go forth, held by the Spirit's quiet strength,  
as a source of light in the world.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Consider exploring these suggested resources and practices throughout the week to help you carry the session's insights into your daily life. These practices can create sacred rhythms that deepen your understanding, nurture ongoing reflection, and open your heart to transformation. As you engage, you may uncover new layers of meaning, guiding you into deeper relationships with yourself, others, and the Divine.

## EXPLORE MORE

Additional resources to consider exploring.

**Book:** [Healing the Heart of Democracy by Parker Palmer](#)

**Book:** [Active Hope by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone](#)

**Poem:** ["Love After Love"](#) by Derek Walcott. A poem about coming home to ourselves, which reflects the act of making space for others and ourselves.

TWOTP Video: [Love Your Enemy with Miroslav Volf](#)

TWOTP Video: [Hurt or Heal with Brene Brown](#)

Poem: [A Ritual to Read to Each Other by William E. Stafford](#)

## SESSION PRACTICES

A contemplative practice to consider to continue engaging the session's theme.

**Hope as a Daily Practice** - This week, commit to a small act of hope each day. Whether it's a kind word, a prayer, or a courageous action, notice how these practices shape your heart and relationships.

**Lectio Divina Practice** - Read this quote slowly, reflecting on a word or phrase that speaks to you: "[The heart broken open becomes a source of compassion and courage.](#)"

**Visio Divina Practice** - Reflect on an image of light breaking through darkness. Let the image speak to your heart about the resilience and quiet power of hope.

# // SESSION THREE //

## Spaces of Grace

### Creating Environments for Healing and Connection

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#### WELCOME

In this session, Parker Palmer reflects on the importance of spaces of grace—environments where trust, safety, and love create the conditions for transformation. He discusses how grace-filled spaces allow individuals and communities to flourish, offering hope and connection in the midst of division and fear.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PREENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

Light a candle or place a meaningful object in your space to symbolize grace and connection. Let this ritual ground you in a posture of openness.

##### Reflective Journaling

Write down thoughts to help internalize and process things more deeply. (Consider journaling about a time when you experienced or created a space where grace and healing were present.)

##### Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** Hinders vulnerability and connection.
- **Cynicism:** Closes off opportunities for grace.
- **Fear:** Undermines the slow, steady process of healing.

##### Centering

Pause, close your eyes, and take several deep breaths. Feel yourself settling into the present moment. Invite God's Spirit to guide you as you reflect on the power of grace-filled spaces.

## Invocation

Receive these words with an open heart as you prepare to reflect:

“Spaces of grace are the ground where healing begins, and where we learn to be more fully human together.”

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

**Spaces of Grace with Parker Palmer (14:32)**

- Watch the video [here](#).
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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Notice what arises for you as you reflect on the video. Resist the urge to analyze; instead, pay attention to what feels alive within you.

- What word, phrase, or story stood out to you most?
- How did you feel—physically or emotionally—during the video?
- Did any part of the session connect to your experiences of grace or healing?
- Where did you notice resistance, openness, or curiosity?
- What is staying with you after watching this session?

**Second Viewing:** *Consider watching the video again to deepen your reflections.*

**A Note to Groups:** *Share your initial observations with one another, focusing on listening with an open heart.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

Use these questions to dive deeper into the session’s themes. Let the Spirit guide your responses and reflections.

- Parker describes spaces of grace as essential for healing and connection. How does this resonate with your experiences?
- Reflect on the conditions that make a space feel safe and grace-filled. What role do trust and vulnerability play?
- How might you cultivate or nurture spaces of grace in your personal relationships or community?
- How do grace-filled environments help individuals and groups move toward greater wholeness?
- What small actions can you take to foster a culture of grace in your daily life?

**A Note to Groups:** *Share your deeper reflections with the group, offering and receiving each other's insights with kindness and grace.*

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Pause and breathe deeply, allowing the session's themes to settle in your heart. Reflect on how God might be inviting you to create spaces of grace in your life.

Consider journaling your thoughts:

"I sense the Spirit inviting me to..."

"I feel drawn toward..."

"I am willing to let go of..."

"I am open to embracing..."

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## RESTING

Before concluding, rest in God's presence. Release any lingering distractions and allow yourself to simply be.

- Take a deep breath, exhaling slowly.
- Rest in the assurance that grace is present within and around you, sustaining your journey.

**A Note to Groups:** Consider closing with a group prayer or sharing a word or phrase that captures what you're taking away from this session.

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## CLOSING

Carry the insights and invitations of this session into your week. Revisit your reflections and let them guide you as you seek to embody grace in your daily life.

## Benediction

Allow these words to accompany you as you move from this sacred space into your daily life:

### LIVING IN THE GRACE OF CONNECTION

May you go forth with a heart open to grace,  
creating spaces where healing and connection can flourish.

May you find the courage to nurture trust and vulnerability in your relationships.

Go forth, knowing that God's grace is at work in and through you,  
bringing wholeness to the world.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Consider exploring these suggested resources and practices throughout the week to help you carry the session's insights into your daily life. These practices can create sacred rhythms that deepen your understanding, nurture ongoing reflection, and open your heart to transformation. As you engage, you may uncover new layers of meaning, guiding you into deeper relationships with yourself, others, and the Divine.

## EXPLORE MORE

Additional resources to consider exploring.

**TWOTP Video:** [Finding a Third Space with Parker Palmer](#)

TWOTP Video: [Holon with Suzanne Stabile](#)

TWOTP Video: [Setting the Table for Others to feast with Suzanne Stabile](#)

Poem: [Kindness by Naomi Shihab Nye](#)

TWOTP Liturgy: [Hospitality by Christine Valters Paintner](#)

## SESSION PRACTICES

A contemplative practice to consider to continue engaging the session's theme.

**Creating a Space of Grace** - This week, focus on cultivating an environment of grace in one relationship or setting. Whether through listening, forgiveness, or patience, notice how your actions foster healing and connection.

**Lectio Divina Practice** - Read this quote slowly, allowing its meaning to deepen:

["Grace is the ground where healing begins, and where we learn to be more fully human together."](#)

**Visio Divina Practice** - Reflect on an image of an open table or a welcoming space. Let the image invite you into God's call to create places of connection and trust.

# // SESSION FOUR //

## Wholeness and Hospitality

### Holding Life's Tensions to Foster Connection and Compassion

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#### WELCOME

In this session, Parker Palmer explores the relationship between hospitality and wholeness. He reflects on how holding life's tensions with love expands our capacity for compassion, connection, and healing. This session invites us to embrace brokenness as a pathway to greater wholeness, both individually and communally.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

Light a candle or hold an object that symbolizes wholeness to you. Let this practice ground you in a posture of openness and receptivity..

##### Reflective Journaling

Write down thoughts to help internalize and process things more deeply. (Consider journaling about a time when embracing a tension or challenge led to growth or healing in your life.

##### Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** Can prevent us from engaging with tension.
- **Cynicism:** May close us off from growth or connection.
- **Fear:** Dismisses the slow work of wholeness.

##### Centering

Pause, close your eyes, and take several deep breaths. Feel yourself settling into the present moment. Invite God to help you hold the tensions and connections in your life with love and grace.

## Invocation

Receive these words with an open heart as you prepare to reflect:

“Wholeness emerges when we hold the tensions of life with love.”

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

### Wholeness and Hospitality with Parker Palmer (11:11)

- Watch the video [here](#).
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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Take time to notice your initial responses to the video without forcing answers or conclusions. Let the Spirit guide your awareness.

- What word, image, or idea stood out to you most?
- How did the video connect to your experiences of tension or wholeness?
- What emotions surfaced? Where did you feel openness, curiosity, or resistance?
- What surprised you or challenged your understanding of brokenness and connection?
- What is staying with you as you reflect on this session?

**Second Viewing:** *Consider watching the video again to deepen your reflections.*

**A Note to Groups:** *Share your initial observations with one another, focusing on listening with an open heart.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

Use these questions to explore the themes of this session more deeply. Let your responses be guided by the Spirit.

- Palmer speaks of brokenness leading to greater capacity for love and connection. How does this idea resonate with your own experiences?
- What does it mean to hold tensions with love rather than avoiding or resolving them?
- How does hospitality—the act of welcoming the “other”—contribute to personal or communal wholeness?
- Reflect on a time when embracing life’s paradoxes deepened your capacity for compassion or resilience.
- In what ways can the church or community model wholeness by holding tensions rather than dismissing them?

**A Note to Groups:** *Share your deeper reflections with the group, offering and receiving each other’s insights with kindness and grace.*

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## **REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING**

Pause and breathe deeply, allowing the themes of this session to settle into your heart. Reflect on how God might be inviting you to live out the practice of hospitality and wholeness in your life.

Consider journaling your thoughts:

“I sense the Spirit inviting me to...”

“I feel drawn toward...”

“I am willing to let go of...”

“I am open to embracing...”

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## **RESTING**

Before concluding, rest in God’s presence. Release any lingering distractions and allow yourself to simply be.

- Take a deep breath, exhaling slowly.
- Rest in the assurance that you are held in God's love and that wholeness is a gift unfolding within and around you.

**A Note to Groups:** *Consider closing with a group prayer or sharing a word or phrase that captures what you're taking away from this session.*

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## CLOSING

Carry the insights and invitations of this session into your week. Revisit your reflections and allow them to guide you toward greater wholeness in your relationships and community.

## Benediction

Allow these words to accompany you as you move from this sacred space into your daily life:

## EMBRACING TENSIONS AND CONNECTIONS

May you go forth with a heart open to life's paradoxes, holding tensions with love and grace.

May your brokenness become a pathway to wholeness, revealing deeper connections and compassion.

Go forth, held by the One who makes all things new.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Consider exploring these suggested resources and practices throughout the week to help you carry the session's insights into your daily life. These practices can create sacred rhythms that deepen your understanding, nurture ongoing reflection, and open your heart to transformation. As you engage, you may uncover new layers of meaning, guiding you into deeper relationships with yourself, others, and the Divine.

## EXPLORE MORE

Additional resources to consider exploring.

**Book:** [The Promise of Paradox: A Celebration of Contradictions in the Christian Life by Parker Palmer](#)

**TWOTP Video:** [Emerging Wholeness with Barbara A Holmes](#)

**TWOTP Video:** [American Jesus with José Humphreys](#)

**TWOTP Video:** [The Divinity of Diversity with José Humphreys](#)

**TWOTP Video:** [A Cruciform Way of Life with Parker Palmer](#)

**TWOTP Visual Liturgy:** [Love One Another](#)

## SESSION PRACTICES

A contemplative practice to consider to continue engaging the session's theme.

**Holding Tension as a Path to Wholeness** - This week, reflect on a tension or paradox in your life that you have been avoiding. Instead of seeking resolution, ask how you might hold it with love and curiosity. Notice how this practice transforms your perspective or relationships.

**Lectio Divina Practice** - Read this quote slowly, reflecting on a word or phrase that speaks to you: "[Wholeness emerges when we hold the tensions of life with love.](#)"

**Visio Divina Practice** - Reflect on an image of a bridge or a thread connecting two sides. Let the image invite you into God's call to hold tension and create connection.

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# VIDEO TRANSCRIPTS

## A Larger Welcome

### Parker Palmer

So I've always been intrigued by the fact that there are critical points in the Scripture, in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, where welcoming the stranger turns out to be, a real fork in the road, as the story is told. So you have Abraham and Sarah in their tent at Hebron. These two elderly people and strangers approach them from the distance.

There must have been some fear in them. They're alone. They're elderly. Who knows who these people are? In our society, there'd be a lot of fear. You're at a national park where you thought you were alone, and suddenly some strangers start coming at you through the trees. Our response probably is to get into the truck or get into the tent, grab the handgun, and, and, prepare to defend ourselves.

But Abraham and Sarah say you're strangers. You've come a long distance. You must be tired. You must be hungry. Sit. Eat, drink. We extend your hospitality. And, of course, in that act, they learn that these strangers are God's representatives who have come to deliver the good news that a child will be given to them. And he will fulfill God's promises.

Through that child, God's promises will be fulfilled to the Hebrew people. And then there's a parallel story about the disciples on the road to Emmaus after the crucifixion, where they're downcast. The Jesus is dead and gone, as far as they know, they're on the wrong side of a lot of things, including the powers and principalities at that time.

And this stranger approaches them on the road. It's a story we all know. Why are you so downcast? And they say, you must be the last guy in town who doesn't know what just happened. And he says, oh, ye of little faith. Don't you remember the prophecy? And they essentially say, yeah, yeah, yeah. Don't talk that way to us.

It doesn't make any sense, but it's getting late. You're a stranger. Come with us and have a meal. And then the famous line, which always moves me when I hear it or think about it. And he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. This was the risen Christ of course, talking to the disciples. Well, if Abraham and Sarah had not welcomed the stranger the Hebrew Bible would only be about eight verses long.

I think that happens somewhere around the eighth chapter of Genesis. And if the disciples had not welcomed the stranger, the Christian church might not have been formed. There wouldn't have been these witnesses to the resurrection event. I think I think that the stranger has a very special role in Scripture as one who who gives us another angle on the news, the good news and all the news, because the stranger comes from a different place than we do, sees different things than we do, has heard different things than we've heard, and he's able to give us a bigger picture of who we are and where we are and what the possibilities are, than we could possibly get all by ourselves. If we all, if we stay within our own lifestyle enclave or our or our own sense of who our family is and who it is and, we keep getting the news from the same sources, and we keep recycling it and we keep breathing the same air, which can get very stale after a while.

But if we reach out to the stranger, we begin to pick up different messages and again, our view of the world becomes larger. And because we're, we're taking in the otherness that we know is out there, but we're always kind of afraid of and we're learning that we don't need to be afraid of it, that it can actually expand and deepen our lives.

We feel more at home in the world through acts of hospitality to the stranger, at least in my life. That's proven true time and time again. And I think it's right at the heart of democracy as well as faith. It's another one of those intersections between Christianity and the demands of a healthy democracy. To extend hospitality to that which seems other than who we are, to, as Marge Piercy says and in one of her poems, to know who we mean when we say we and each day

That definition of we by encountering the stranger, learning from the stranger, offering food and drink to the stranger. Breaking bread with the stranger. And I think always, always from where I sit. The stranger may not see it this way, but I do always, always. He is known to them in the breaking of the bread. I've lost the ability to, you know, to carve out space for the wounded, to cry out.

I don't know the whole answer to that. I have a couple of hunches. One is that one is a theology hunch. I think that the way Christianity has been delivered theologically too many times has been received by people as a call to perfection. And when they feel that they can't achieve perfection and they don't want to talk about who they are, so many people who are alienated from the church, and I think some who are still in the church, will say that the basic reason for their alienation is the heavy handedness with which the gospel was preached, that there's punishment involved and not living up to these standards rather than grace and forgiveness.

And that punishment might come from God, or that punishment might come from us. And that's not a message that makes you inclined to talk about your weaknesses. But I think there's also, in addition to the theological issue or the issue around the way the theology is framed and delivered, because I don't think that's good Christian theology.

There's also an institutional or sociological issue, and that is that in most churches there's a designated receiver of suffering pain and problems. And that's the pastor. And you go into the privacy of the pastor's study and you close the door and you talk about your problem, you talk about your weakness. It's not that I disbelieve in pastoral counseling.

I personally have benefited from some good pastoral counseling, but when that's the only way a church has to hold, so the suffering in its members lives, a tacit and very unhealthy message is being delivered to the community, which is you can't trust the community to deal with these things. You can't trust anybody in the community to deal with these things except the designated hitter, the pastor.

And then you have to close the door. I think there are alternatives to pastoral counseling, not in an either or a way, but in a both and way. There are...I've written about something that Quakers do called the Clearness Committee, which is 350 year old way of gathering a small group of people around an individual struggle and being profoundly helpful to that person.

I know, because I've been the focus person of a number of clearness committees, as I've wrestled with various things in my life. Not all problems are right for a clearness committee, and not all people are strong enough for a clearness committee. Some problems and some people need the privacy of the pastor's study. But if that's the only option we offer, I think we're weakening our Christian community rather than strengthening it.

And that's a dance that can be changed. There are ways to do it.

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## Habits of Hope

### Parker Palmer

There's so much suffering going on right now. Economic suffering, communal suffering, psychological suffering. And it's

always interesting to me, as someone who has wrestled with clinical depression several times in his life, that we talk about these economic downturns as taking us toward depression, and I think that word is weightier than we even realize. It's not just something that is measured by economists, but it's something that has to do with people's fears and people's capacity to hope for something better and people's capacity to engage in the acts of citizenship that make for

The one thing you can do to tear down a society is demoralize people to the point where they become pawns of whatever the powers that be want them to think or say or do. And, as a Quaker and as a Christian, it seems to me that these kinds of concerns are right at the heart of the mission of the faith tradition, certainly, of Jesus's life.

And they've never gone away. It's...we've been in a pretty steady state of wrestling between what Lincoln called the better angels of our nature and what, by implication, he understood as the lesser angels of our nature, the powers of light and the powers of darkness. Democracy itself. Is a living laboratory of our capacity to evoke the better angels in ourselves and in each other.

I'm talking about the fact that we have the power within us to blow up that lab if we make that choice, but we also have these regenerative powers of the human heart to, to heal, to make things hold or to build community. And that, it seems to me, is what we need to be doing right now especially.

And it's certainly what the church is called to do in these times and in every time, as far as I know. I think the church has a special role in forming the habits of the heart. They make democracy possible habits of the heart, like understanding that we're all in this together. We're all in this together economically. We're all in this together biologically, we're all in this together communally.

And I think one of the big things that Christians need to learn to do is to reach across those lines that have historically made us think, well, this is about us, not about them. I think it was W.H. Auden who once said that, Christians seemed to believe that we were put in the world by God to save all those other people.

Why God put all those other people in the world. We haven't got the foggiest idea. And I think that that sort of pinpoints a kind of a kind of arrogance that actually makes the church, an actor on the dark side of this problem that that we're now having, and that we've, that we've had pretty perpetually, over the course of American history and human history as well.

Jesus, I think, would have been very familiar with what we're going through right now. He turned over the tables of the moneychangers in the temple. He was a man of the people. And for the people, he had a preferential option, as the theologians like to say, for the poor and the poor are growing in our society.

I read in this morning's paper that over half of the school children in this society are now eligible for the free lunch program. A quarter of the kids in this society go to bed hungry every night. These are intolerable facts. And they're obviously, the kinds of things, the kinds of pathologies that Jesus was responding to in his own time and would certainly be responding to today.

And if we are, the word made flesh is, I believe we are all called to be as Christians if we are called to incarnate the gospel, in whatever way we're able, then these are things that we need to be responding to as well.

#### **Travis / TWOTP**

What does that really mean? "We, the people" and "democracy," and what is...yeah...what does that have to do with the word being made flesh. And what is the "heart" of democracy? You just using that metaphorically? You really mean heart?

#### **Parker Palmer**

Well you know the human heart if you trace it back to its original and ancient meaning, it comes from the Latin core core

and it means that center is a place in our cells where all of our capacities converge. So it's not just our emotions, it's our intellect, our will, our capacity for faith.

Everything we've got, as we try to be in this world and understand the world that we're in as well as ourselves. So when I talk about healing the heart of democracy and about the habits of the heart that we need, I'm not simply talking about an emotional response to the problems around us. Well, you know, we the people obviously were the words that the founders of this country used to call this country into being we, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union.

Unfortunately, the founders had a very narrow concept of who we, the people were. To them, it meant landed white gentry. It excluded women, it excluded enslaved human beings, it excluded Native Americans. But they gave us a system of government that I think has a genius in it. And the genius, at least unconsciously, had to do with the founders recognizing their own fallibility, their own limitations in theological terms, one might say their own sinfulness, because the system they left us is capable of evolution, so that today we've moved far beyond the founders understanding of who we, the people, are, to include all of the folks that they excluded and others that they didn't even think of.

It would have been inconceivable to the founders that by the year 2040, over half of this country will be nonwhite. So the system of government that they left us makes evolution possible because it has a capacity to hold tension creatively. If you look at the most elemental pieces of the system of our government, the, the, the judicial branch, the legislative branch, and the executive or administrative branch, it's very clear across American history that decisions made in one branch of government, it held intention was a different opinion, and the other branch of government and, I image these I image our government as a loom that that holds the tension of various threads of understanding and argument and difference and debate in such a way that that we are able, over time, to keep weaving and re weaving the fabric of a good society.

So you have to be a weaver to do this work, and you have to have that tension holding capacity not only in our institutions but within ourselves.

It's impossible to be a citizen in this society without holding the tension. And I think, I think what this has to do most centrally with Christian faith, as I understand it, is that Christianity is a for me, is a a spiritual path that requires me to do what I call stand in the tragic gap, which I think is right at the heart of Jesus's understanding of reality.

To the extent that I understand him and I, my understanding is limited. What do I mean by the tragic gap? I mean that on the one hand, on one side of the gap, we look at the hard realities that surround us: the realities of poverty, the realities of anger and hatred, the realities of despair. We see all of that in the newspapers every day.

We read it online and watch it on TV. But on the other side of where we're standing, are those things we know to be possible? Not because we wish they were so or dreamed that they might be so, but because we've actually seen them with our own eyes. And we know there's greed, but we've seen generosity. We know there's ferocious competitive individualism and a social Darwinism, but we've seen collaboration and community.

What we need to be able to do if we want to stay in the action, is to stand in that tragic gap, which I think is where Jesus calls us to be. Without flipping out on one side or the other, you flip out into too much reality and you get what I call corrosive cynicism, which is, oh, I see how the world works.

I'll just get my slice of the pie, a bigger slice than I deserve if I can, and let the devil take the hindmost or on the other side, you flip out into what I call irrelevant idealism, which leaves you sort of floating above the fray. These two things, corrosive cynicism and irrelevant idealism, sound like very different ways of being in the world, but they have the same impact on a person's life.

They take us out of the action. They take us out of the tragic gap. In Christian terms. You know, the Messiah has come, but is the Messiah. The kingdom of God is right here. But where is the kingdom? For me, these are simple realities that the realities of what I hold by faith on the one hand, and the realities of the empirical evidence on the other.

I have to be able to stand between those apparent polar opposites and hold them in creative tension. There's at least two kinds of tension. There's creative tension, and there's destructive tension. And as I put it in the book, which is about the heart of democracy and the habits of our own hearts, there's the heart that's broken into a thousand pieces by trying to hold these tensions scattered around on the floor.

That takes us out of the action as we crawl around trying to put our hearts back together. But then there's the heart that's broken open by these tensions into largeness, into greater capacity to hold both the joy and the suffering that comes with being human, and that comes with living with one another. And those aren't metaphors for me.

Those are lived experiences. I know people who have hearts, whose hearts have been shattered and who never managed to put them back together. I also know people who have held the tension, for example, of the dearest person in their life dying, and they go through a period of grieving where they think they don't know how they can go on, they don't know how they can take a next step, but they emerge.

And I've seen it happen time and again, saying, I woke up this morning suddenly aware that I've become a larger, more compassionate, more understanding person, more fully inhabiting my own life, more fully able to connect in life giving ways with other people because of this great loss, I've suffered not in spite of it. And that to me is evidence of the heart broken open rather than the heart broken apart.

If I could say one thing to the world as a Christian about the kind of citizenship we're called to as part of this great mix, I would say we are called to live in this world with broken open hearts, not denying the suffering, not denying the grief, but neither striving for a kind of perfection which will take us out of the action into a kind of fantasy world.

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## Spaces of Grace

### **Parker Palmer**

Many times in my 40 years of work. I've gotten a call from a congregation that has said to me from the minister, the lay leader, who said, would you come and consult with us about how to bring more diversity into our homogeneous white congregation is almost always how it's phrased. And my response over the years has been very consistent.

I will not come and even talk with you about that, as long as you cling to the myth of a homogeneous white congregation. There is no such thing as a homogeneous white congregation. There's only a bunch of white people pretending that they don't have any differences among themselves, for fear that if they touch those differences or get too close to them, everything's going to blow up in their face.

Which makes me wonder what everything is and whether it's worth it. Because if we can't deal with our differences in the church, where can we? And so I've said to these churches, why would someone with a visible difference conceivably want to join a church or visit a church populated by people who look alike and can't even deal with their own invisible differences?

So our invisible differences have to do with the fact that here's somebody who's just gotten fired from his job, but the church is the last place where he can talk about it. Here's someone whose daughter, at age 16 or 15, is going off the rails with drugs or alcohol or sex. But the church is the last place where you can talk about it.

Why is it that the church is not a safe place for people who share a similar lifestyle or social enclave experience, not a safe place to talk about our differences. If the church could become a place where we learn to hold those tensions, we would be forming a habit of the heart that would make for better citizens in the larger society.

But that would be a secondary consequence. The first consequence is that the church would become more like church is called to be a place where we can hold each other with love and grace, despite our differences, where the person who is homophobic learns about the humanity of gay and lesbian young people by dealing with the struggle, trying to hold gracefully the struggle of the parents of a gay or lesbian teenager who don't know what to do, who can bring the good news that God created all of us, as we are and loves us unconditionally as we are.

And we're called to love each other the same way. So these are the internal dynamics of the church that could, in fact, help us engage in creative tension, holding and and could make the church a more faithful servant of the larger society in the best sense of that word serving its highest purpose is its highest ideals, its highest potentials.

By giving people a lived experience of what it means to hold tensions. I think the point I'm making is that until we learn to do that in our private lives, we're not going to have very much at, stepping into this very conflicted public arena we've got and trying to do it out there. The good news for me is that there are lots and lots of people who do know how to hold tension in their private lives, and there are lots of them in the church.

Anybody who's raised a teenager, I think knows how to hold tension to some extent. Many parents of teenagers who spent the last 15 years with this child know who this child is. They see his or her potential. They see all the hopefulness that's in that young life. And then after 13 or 14, they see this child starting to make some bad decisions to fall in with some bad company.

And they're holding a tension between what they know this child could be and what's happening right now in this child's life. All the danger signs that something may be about to go off the rails. A good parent knows you don't deal with that by command or coercion. It's the last thing you want to do. A good parent knows that you create around that child a space of that simultaneously characterized by unconditional love and the expectancy of hope, to help that child grow into that expectancy, knowing that unconditional love allows him or her to make mistakes and not get thrown out on the street for it.

So it's an example of tension holding in parenting that many people know how to do in their private lives. Can we also do that with each other in congregations? Can we also do that with each other in the larger society? To me, those are questions about the habits of the heart that churches are or aren't forming. That can help heal the heart of democracy.

You know, write it right at the heart of what democracy needs is this institutional and individual capacity for tension holding creative tension holding, and the most, the most vivid. The illustration I can give of why we need to do that is that the end of tension is also the end of life. So you may not like the tensions that are in your life right now, but I can guarantee you that when you die, they'll go away.

That's the one time they will go away. And politically, historically, we have evidence of that in the Third Reich, in Nazi Germany and in the Holocaust, which was called by the Germans the Final Solution, the end of tension, the resolution of all this tugging and pulling, this self-doubt about this inner emptiness, this anger at our plight. The Germans came up with the final solution to that, and we all know what that meant.

6 million Jews were murdered and God knows how many. Professing Christians, people with physical and mental disabilities, gay men, gypsies, anyone who didn't fit the mold of so-called Aryan perfection. If you want an end to tension, fascism is the thing for you. If you want democracy, you need to embrace tension as a sign of life, as a sign that we can keep growing.

We can keep evolving. We can recycle these critical issues of racial justice and economic justice and environmental responsibility to take just three examples. We can return to them again and again and again, because the founders gave

us a set of tension holding institutions and re weave and keep re weaving the fabric of a good society. Coming up with better answers to those questions than the last that we came up with.

We can do that if we have a personal and communal capacity that matches the institutional capacity for creative tension, holding, we can do that if we insist that the people we send to Congress are as good at that tension holding as we want to be, and don't shut the whole thing down through a variety of stonewalling and back stage deals with lobbyists and other ways filibustering that politicians have come up with to essentially undermine the functioning of the institutions that the founders created.

We need to say very clearly, first to ourselves and then to the people we elect. If you don't like tension, if you're not willing to hold tension, fascism is the thing for you. And that's not what we want in this country.

**Travis / TWOTP**

Could you talk more about the communal instinct versus, you know, American individualism?

**Parker Palmer**

Well, I think America has always been a pretty complex mixture of both the individualistic and the communal impulse. And, and it might be, it might be a fair thing to say that capitalism has more individualism in it, and democracy has more communalism in it.

**Travis / TWOTP**

That's socialism, right? Just a different word.

**Parker Palmer**

Communalism is socialism.

**Travis / TWOTP**

The same thing?

**Parker Palmer**

I think it's a horse of a different color altogether. It's been famously said that what we have in this country is capitalism for the poor and socialism for the rich. And I think that's absolutely true. We wouldn't be in the economic crisis we had if the government hadn't collaborated with rich people.

And collaborate through not regulating or turning. Turning away from the malfeasance of large financial institutions. So, you know, I think we've, we've we've had there's a. One of the big concepts for me that I also derived originally from the Christian tradition is the concept of paradox. This notion that two things that look like opposites may in fact go hand in hand may in fact do a co-creative dance with one another.

And so I think there's a form of individualism that we can affirm and a form of communalism that we can affirm that, in fact, dance together and need each other. There's a form of individualism, which has to do with the fact that I need to learn to speak my own truth, to think my own thoughts, to exercise my own agency or capacity to be an agent of change in the world.

And there's an equal truth that I need to do that in collaboration with others to check my thinking, to check my agency, to temper my voice against realities that other folks can see that I can't see because of where I stand. And I think that at its best, the Christian church models that co-creative dance of individualism and communalism or selfhood and community.

So Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who I think is a theologian who has earned the right to be listened to with great care, once said, let the person who cannot be alone be aware of being in community, and let the person who cannot be in community beware of being alone. It's not quite individualism and communalism. It's more about solitude and community.

But I think the point holds that there's a way in which the creative self working from his or her interiority, as again, as Quakers would say, working from that of God. And every person needs to be in community, to be checked, to be balanced, to be supported, to be encouraged and to be aided and abetted in the doing of good work.

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## Wholeness and Hospitality

**Travis / TWOTP**

Can you guarantee the stranger won't take any of my stuff?

**Parker Palmer**

No I can't. It's. I can't, I can't do that.

**Travis / TWOTP**

So what you're saying is that because America is a Christian nation, those ethics will spread out and that democracy will come back and trickle down will ultimately open up and everybody will be welcome at the table?

**Parker Palmer**

Well, I don't think America is a Christian nation.

**Travis / TWOTP**

Cut!

**Parker Palmer**

So let's take on the question of the Christian nation first. So, we're not a Christian nation. I make bold to assert for several reasons. One is that the founders themselves, who are often treated as if they were hardcore Christians, really had a very wide range of opinions about Christianity and a very wide range of religious beliefs among themselves.

Second, even if that weren't the case, they were at great pains to include an amendment to the Constitution that prohibited the establishment of a state church because they had come from a society where they saw what happened when you had a state church and it wasn't very tasty. So the separation of church and state is a very core principle which keeps us from being a Christian nation in that sense.

Third, if we look at this in terms of what would Jesus do? I don't. And if that means actually asking that question and then actually doing it, then I don't think we can say we're a Christian nation because Jesus wouldn't tolerate the fact that 52% of schoolkids these days are eligible for the free lunch program, that 20% of the people hold, 80% of the wealth, and that a quarter of our children go to bed hungry every night in the wealthiest nation on the earth.

That just wouldn't wash with him. So that's strike three, I think. Strike four. If you want an extra turn at the bat, strike four is the fact that our popular culture is not Christian in any way I can recognize. Here we sit a week after. In the week after Thanksgiving, our annual national Christmas celebration begins on Black Friday.

The day after Thanksgiving with people showing up at malls at midnight in order to get the best bargains, and in some instances, doing violence to each other as they try to get the X-Box before the guy next to them. And, and and celebrating really our true civil religion, which is consumerism. So, my hope isn't lodged in what I regard as the utter illusion of a Christian nation.

My hope is lodged in the fact that not only Christians, but people of a variety of other, religious convictions and backgrounds hold hospitality as hospitality to the stranger, the welcoming of otherness, as a core virtue. That's not ours alone. And in fact, it's possible that we are somewhere down the list of those religions that practice that, with real openness and generosity.

But my hope is that our religious traditions can make a country to American democracy, not by invoking sort of semi theocratic principles or wish dreams, but by drawing deep on that virtue of hospitality to provide, safe space for folks who differ about things to come together and settings of hospitality and find out that we have more in common than, than otherwise.

We were sitting here just yesterday with a couple of people representing some religious organizations. In Madison, Wisconsin, who were thinking about how to host civic conversations within the congregations that are represented by these organizations. And as we talked, I suggested that maybe an even bigger contribution would be for the churches to serve as hosts to a civic conversation that involves all the stakeholders and the local community to come together, whether they belong to your church or not.

Saying, we have a gift to offer and it's the gift of safe space. It's the gift of unconditional love. It's the gift of knowing that God is always moving among us. Whether you name it the same way we do or not, there's a spirit of hope and possibility that can build bridges across these apparently impossible divides.

So my hope is that everyone who is rooted in a tradition of hospitality, which includes Christians, which certainly includes Jews and Muslims and Buddhists and Hindus, and includes secular humanists who have always been open to other interests, perhaps more than religious people have, because secular humanism values learning so highly that all of us could come together around this, this deeply human need not only to be received with hospitality, but to offer hospitality to the other.

I'm 72 years old.

**Travis / TWOTP**

And the good, by the way.

**Parker Palmer**

Thanks. It's the makeup. So, you know, I spend more time thinking about death than I did when I was 32 or 40 or 52. And wondering about it and wondering what's going to be on my mind and heart at that time. And I'm pretty sure that I would not die a happy person by thinking, am I ever glad that I shut my door to the world and just hung out with my own kind for the last 72 years?

That's not a happy thought to me. I think that if I'm able to say I lived my life as openly as I knew how to, the vast variety of God's creation, human and non-human, learned as much about it as I could. I appreciated it as deeply as I could and participated in it as profoundly as I knew how.

I think that would be a happy thought. As I return in death to the Hidden wholeness, as Thomas Merton called it, that underlies all the brokenness that we see on the surface of our lives. As I go back to that root system of life from which we all come and to which we all will return.

**Travis / TWOTP**

What does that have to do with salvation?

**Parker Palmer**

Everything. Salvation to me means wholeness, and wholeness is not, is not something one achieves on one's own. Wholeness, I believe, has to do with not only feeling, but knowing that we really are all in this together, not just as a

human species, but with the natural world as well. Salvation means gratitude for the fact that I'm part of this vast mystery and, and joy in the fact that I will be returned to it.

I don't know if I'll be able to feel that joy on the day I die, but I think that practice sin dying and.

Understanding why? It could be a joyful reality is an important thing to do as part of the agenda of aging. And I don't say that lightly, because having been through a few experiences of death and life, particularly clinical depression and, I know that joy was not easy to feel in those long months of darkness. But as I said earlier, I also know that there was joy on the other side of all that.

And I'm quite certain that there's something on the other side of all this.

**Travis / TWOTP**

What's saving your life today?

**Parker Palmer**

Love, grace and forgiveness.

**Travis / TWOTP**

And would God prefer tax cuts or government spending?

**Parker Palmer**

I don't think God has an opinion on that one. But who am I to say?