

Simply One Page-When Well-Intended People Hurt Other People

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision fueled by my one page intent. Mike Haddorff-2521

This morning, as I'm driving and trying to settle the ache inside me, I keep thinking about something that has shown up numerous times in my life: sometimes well-intended people hurt other people. And that truth lands with a particular kind of heaviness today.

Our local church is walking through a heartbreaking moment. Our council, good people, made the decision to replace our senior pastor of twenty-seven years. The decision was delivered quickly, unexpectedly, and without the preparation many of us assumed would precede such a move. It caught the congregation off guard. It caught the pastor off guard. And now we're left with confusion, sadness, and a deep sense of rupture.

After the service last Sunday, the council shared a brief explanation and then opened the floor for questions. I appreciated their willingness to do that.

Following the Q and A, I heard two different people, both hurting, say, "They're good people, and their hearts are in the right place." I understand why those words surfaced. When we are wounded, the natural human instinct is to search for clarity. If the hurt comes from obvious wrongdoing, we know where to place the pain. But when the hurt comes from people we know, people we trust, people who meant well, the pain becomes harder to hold.

And yet that is precisely the space where most of life plays out.

I have been on both sides of this reality. I have hurt others, not usually from selfish intent, but from my limited perception of what I thought was right at the time. Sometimes I misread the situation. Sometimes I acted too quickly. Sometimes I held too tightly to my own certainty.

I also know what it's like to be deeply hurt by decisions made by others who were acting out of their own understanding of "what needed to be done." This is part of the human story. No one is immune from it.

Because of this, I've come to believe something that shapes how I'm seeing our current situation: there is no "us" and "them." There is only "we." We are all filtering reality through our own lenses. We are all working with partial understanding. We are all capable of hurting and being hurt, even when our intentions are good.

So maybe the invitation here is not to rush toward fixing, judging, or dividing. Maybe the invitation is to recognize and name the shared humanity in the room, the confusion, the fear, the disappointment, the sincerity, and to walk humbly within it.

And maybe this is why we need a Savior. Not to rescue us from the anger of a God who demands judgment, but to rescue us from the limits, the blindness, and the tangled motives within our own hearts. We need saving from ourselves, from the ways we misunderstand each other, and from the ways our incomplete vision can wound the very people we care about.

As I drive this morning, this is my prayer:
for healing,
for humility,
and for Jesus to lead all of us, together, toward grace.