

There has been a seismic shift in my parenting, that has changed everything. It was the moment my 7 year old discovered the eye roll. I don't know where she learned it. But I first experienced it one night at bath time. It was about time to get out of the tub, I had given her the usual 5 minute warning, I tell her it's time to get out and.... She crosses her arms and rolls her eyes. I could feel this inner rage coming to the surface. The audacity of this child.

My daughter's love and mastery of the eye roll was confirmed by an outside source, when at her parent-teacher conference last week, I get this.

[picture]

Notice the last one...'I'm really good at...'. And although spelling synonyms needs work, her teacher confirmed, she is quite good at the eye roll.

And what is it about the eye roll? It's such a small movement...and yet it communicates volumes. It's an immediate dismissal, contempt, an instant strip of dignity. In one small movement you can shut a person down, shut them out.

Because what is an eyeroll actually saying? What's its purpose? Why do we do it?

To dismiss someone

It says you are not worth my time

It's the silent equivalent to "I know you are but what am I?"

Dismantles a person's dignity

It says you don't deserve to be in my space

And if we're being really honest, that's just the tip of the iceberg....because that eyeroll has an entire monster under the surface of beliefs I hold about you.

(Wasn't it just the tip of the iceberg that sunk the titanic?)

We're in this series, 'Do Unto Others' where we are talking about how to treat others with kindness...especially those who we don't agree with...especially during this election season. And as I've been preparing for today, I've been thinking a lot about the eye roll. Mostly because I've found myself wanting to use it so much more often these days than I'd care to admit.

I mean, there are times and seasons (like the one we're in) where it just feels like it's eye rolling season. Or like...

- Like when someone cuts you off in traffic
- Or takes a whole cart of groceries in the self check out line
- Or driving slow in the passing lane or driving the exact speed limit
- And apparently when I ask my child to get out of the bathtub

I've had this realization, not revelation...because I knew this, I just hadn't thought about it before...Jesus' ministry was prime eye rolling season...maybe even pretty similar to today... and yet, we don't read one place where that's how Jesus responded.

Not when he met the woman at the well

Not Judas when he betrayed him...

Not when a man named Zacchaeus climbed a tree, just to get a glimpse of Jesus over the crowd.

Zacchaeus was a piece of work. have you ever had that experience where there's someone at work, or when you were in grade school, or on a group project that no one likes.

For me, it was a girl named.....never mind. Her names not important. But she was the girl when I was in middle school who acted like she was better than everyone. She always walked with her nose, just a little in the air...she always wore the name brand clothes...when I was in school reebok had those pump sneakers...she had 2 pairs.

THAT was Zacchaeus. He was the richest, most disliked person in town. He was a tax collector and collected more than just taxes...he added on his own fee, and everyone knew it but had no choice but to pay...and no one could stand him.

So here's this guy, dressed in ridiculously expensive clothes, probably walking with his nose in the air, acting like he was better than everyone... climbing a tree to see Jesus.

Can you imagine how the people would've responded??

[eye roll]

Luke 19:1-7

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.

...and when the crowd saw it, the Bible doesn't tell us this, but I am 100% sure people rolled their eyes...mumbling and grumbling about the guy they can't stand doing something they can't stand because he's the one doing it...and then, JESUS INVITES HIMSELF OVER

TO HIS HOUSE. (honestly stresses me out...like Zacchaeus, your house is just company ready at a moment's notice?)

The people had already made up their minds about Zacchaeus (and who can blame them?) But not Jesus. Jesus didn't roll his eyes...Jesus created a space. Jesus invites Zacchaeus to a table. Because Jesus knew something that maybe we need reminded of. Jesus knew that **by showing respect to people, you're giving God a space to do more.**

And I'm reminded of other times Jesus respected people, loved them, offering people a space for God to do more.

Woman at the well – created a space when no one else would, in the middle of the day in a public place.

Judas, during the last supper. Jesus washed his feet, too. Jesus fed him a meal, too. Jesus created space for Judas, too. I wonder if Jesus thought that maybe it would be the feet washing moment where Judas would respond, or maybe when he broke the bread and passed the wine. Judas didn't. And Jesus didn't force him. Because Jesus knew that it was his job to create the space and not force someone to sit in it.

Jesus created these spaces, it was up to the person how they responded. We could've kept reading Zacchaeus' story. He stepped fully into the space Jesus created. He acknowledged his mistakes and vowed to repay.

Actually, let's read it, because it's powerful:

Luke 19:8-10

Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.'

Jesus created a space. I think that's our job too. **Our job is to create spaces**, but it's not to force someone to sit in them with us. When we create space, we *bring dignity to people, we uncover the humanness in another soul, we're reminded that they too are created in the image of God.*

I had this realization several years ago. There's someone in my family, she and I don't see eye to eye. For years, I felt like it was my job to change her mind. I would roll my eyes, get mad, tell her how wrong she was and shockingly, those strategies didn't work.

Several years ago, I couldn't take it anymore. I observed her actions and words and they were actively hurting people I love, people she said SHE loved. And I told her. I yelled. I'm sure I rolled my eyes. Nothing changed, except my relationship with her.

In the days following, I couldn't shake that conversation. I kept replaying it in my mind and I had this realization, that I would never change her mind and THEN a realization that maybe that wasn't my job. I stewed on this for a few days and realized I needed to create a new kind of space. At that time, she and I were living across the country from each other so I texted her and told her I needed to talk to her.

As I called her later that day, my heart was racing, I could feel my tears just under the surface. When she answered I said I needed to apologize. That I was sorry I was trying to change her mind. That it's really hard for me to watch her actions and hear her words and know they are hurting people we both love. That she has a chance to change the narrative of our family, but it's not my job to change her mind, and I'm sorry I was trying to do that.

And she said....you're right. It's not your job and here's why you're wrong.

Not exactly the response I wanted, hoped for, but also, I had this divine realization in the moment, that that wasn't mine to own. I let her talk.

When she was done, I told her I was glad I had called. (that might've been a lie) But I am, especially looking back. I do not regret creating that space. And it has become the theme of our relationship....I invite her into spaces that feel safe...to a concert, or getting our nails done, or running a race together. It's hard. It's exhausting. And I often wonder if it's worth it and sometimes I cry before and after, but I would rather create a space, create a chance for something to change, than not at all.

And I feel it deep in my core, that I'm being called to create spaces in my relationship with her. If not for her, for her kids and mine...for them to see something different. To end the generational curse of avoiding conversations about politics and religion...and avoidance that says our differences are too great to come together, for me to respect and love you...There's a different way and it begins with the creation of spaces. Because agreement is not a precursor to respect.

One of my favorite philosophers, Taylor Swift once said– I want to be defined by the things that I love, not the things I hate...

I want this for me. I want this for Christians. I want this for my children and our world.

Because we all matter and have a place and belong in God's family. God's family is incomplete without any one of us...

...and that's true for the people I want to roll my eyes at, too. And when I remember THAT, creating a space seems like the least I can do.

Where do you find yourself rolling the eyes of your heart? Who are the people in your family? Workplace? What does it look like to create space for them? To offer them dignity? To let them know you SEE them, even if you don't agree with them?

I mean, that's what Jesus did over and over again. That's what he did for Zacchaeus.

'Dignity Index' – it's not easy. it takes conscious prep before you offer the invitation. It takes self-reflection, self-regulation, I gotta check my biases at the door. To help us do this, we have a tool you can get on the way out. It's a 'Dignity Index with things to think about as you are inviting someone into an eye-roll free space.

Psalm 18:19 "He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me."

I read somewhere that "spaciousness" is one of the images of salvation - of what God does for us. It feels fitting that as image bearers, we are also called to create space.

I'm gonna ask the band to come up...as we sing this final song together, who is coming to mind for you? Who do you need to create a space for where God might do some work...in you and them?