We’ve come to the end of Hamilton’s book of “why?” and in the last chapter he asks us “why does God’s love prevail?”

I think the more appropriate question is not Why but How? How does God do it? How does he walk us through our fears and suffering and uses us for one another and force evil and suffering to serve God?

As usual the answer is found in Christ. Living in fear and suffering is not new to the people of this earth. And though we are living in hard times I guarantee you ones in history who have gone before us can honestly say that their dog-bone is bigger than ours.

In John’s gospel we see the disciples, afraid and hiding behind locked doors. Suddenly Jesus stood among them and said “Peace be with you,”. Then he showed them his wounds.

I wonder why Jesus did that. I wonder what he wanted them – what he wants us – to see. Or, what he wanted them-what he wants us-to know.

I think that in showing us his wounds Jesus is identifying with every person who has ever been or is wounded. I think the open wounds of Jesus hold the pain of the world.

And this is the meaning of the cross-God knows, understands, and has experienced our suffering.

The poet **[Warsan Shire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsan_Shire%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)** writes in her poem, [**“what they did yesterday afternoon,”**](http://amberjkeyser.com/2015/11/warsan-shire/) that pain is everywhere:

*later that night
i held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
and whispered
where does it hurt?*

 *it answered
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere.*

The wounded body of Jesus is an emblem of our wounded world (see Caputo, Cross and Cosmos, 9). To look at Jesus’ wounds is to see the wounds we’ve received and the ones we’ve inflicted on others.

And I wonder what that brings up for you. What hurts your heart today? What are the tender spots of your life? What’s deep inside that you don’t want anyone to see? Where do you see another hurting? Can you hold his or her gaze, or do you look away because you just don’t want to see? In what ways have you and I added to the pain of another?

The daily news breaks my heart. I see fear and death. I see protests, anger and violence. I see prejudice and racism. I see arrogance and privilege. I see unemployment, poverty and economic hardship. Those are the open wounds of our country and we’re hemorrhaging. We’re bleeding out and some can’t breathe.

America is in a hard place these days, and we have been for quite a while. Over the last 9 months of the coronavirus many have said that we’re all in this together. Yes, but we’re not all together in this. We are not “all together in one place”. Our country is divided, fragmented, and wounded. And so is my heart. Maybe yours is too.

It’s not easy to talk about our wounds; whether it’s our individual wounds or our national wounds, whether it’s the wounds we’ve received or the ones we’ve inflicted. To talk about our wounds requires us to look at what we’ve done and left undone. It means we each have to look within ourselves. It means taking responsibility for our lives. It means valuing the life and wounds of another as much as our own.

We might need to confess, and we might need to forgive. We might need to reach out to another, and we might need to open ourselves to another’s reaching toward us.

I know all that in my head and it makes sense. But most of the time I don’t want to face or deal with my wounds. It’s too painful. It’s a vulnerable and risky place to be. And maybe you feel like that too. More often than not we just want to deny that they hurt and ignore or forget them. Sometimes we make judgments about and blame others. Other times we want to use our wounds and play the victim. But maybe worst of all is when we use them as a justification for hurting someone else.

But Jesus doesn’t do any of those things. Instead, he shows up behind the locked doors, stands among the disciples in the midst of their fear, and says, “Peace be with you.”

Jesus wounds sit in the middle of the peace he offers. And what if that’s true for us? What if we all live with a wounded peace? What if the only real peace we can offer comes out of the wounds we’ve suffered?

“Peace be with you,” Jesus says. What does that mean when you’re afraid and you’ve locked the doors of your house, your heart, your life?

“Peace be with you,” Jesus says. What does that mean as we continue reopening the country and economy in the midst of COVID-19? What does that mean for the friends and family of the almost 200,000 people who have died from COVID-19? What does that peace mean when we continue to draw lines between those who wear mask and those who don’t, between politicians and scientists, between those who are able to stay home and those who have to get out and work?

What does that mean in light of America’s racism? What does that mean for the cities that are burning and the businesses that have been looted? What does that mean for those who have lost everything to forest fires and severe storms and hurricanes? What does it mean to the children and parents separated from each other at the border?

“Peace be with you,” Jesus says. What does that mean for you and me today? What is this peace Jesus offers?

I can tell you this. The peace Jesus offers doesn’t mean serenity or lack of conflict. And it doesn’t mean that we necessarily get our way. And I think it’s more than a truce, an agreement to disagree, or the resignation to go along in order to get along.

The peace Jesus offers changes hearts. It sends people into the world. It heals lives and let’s all people breathe. The peace Jesus offers will be found next to our wounds. It’s a wounded peace. And this is what Hamilton is talking about.

“Peace be with you,” Jesus says. **Why** can we be assured of this peace? Perhaps the more appropriate question again is **How** can we be assured of this peace?

Paul gives us the answer in Romans 8. *(Note: when Paul wrote this Christians were being dipped in tar, tied to steaks, and lit on fire, while alive, and used as human torches to light the Vatican Gardens in Rome.)*

**28**We know that all things work together for good[[u](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-28130u)] for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

**35**Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

**37**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38**For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39**nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus-God’s love always prevails.

What will you do with your wounded peace today? To whom will you offer it? And how will you let God’s prevailing love seen in the wounded peace of Christ – the very Christ that lives in you - make a difference in the life of another?