Episode 4: TURN

As Jesus was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. – Mark 2:14

Like the disciples, we are called by Jesus to follow the Way of Love. With God’s help, we can turn from the powers of sin, hatred, fear, injustice, and oppression toward the way of truth, love, hope, justice, and freedom. In “turning,” we reorient our lives to Jesus Christ, falling in love again, again, and again.

In this episode of Traveling the Way of Love, we visit with the Rev. Becca Stevens, founder of Thistle Farms. This community, raised up in Nashville, Tennessee, is dedicated to working with women who are surviving trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. Over the years, with Becca’s guidance, the strength of the survivors, and the support of the community, Thistle Farms has changed countless lives, developed justice enterprises, and built a national and global network that helps transform the world into something closer to God’s dream for it.

Throughout these discussions, we hear about ordinary people who are committed to the extraordinary work of serving God in their communities. We hear about the daily changes – sometimes small – that we can make in our own lives to be more faithful and more loving. We also hear about the ways, individually and corporately, that we have fallen down – and moreover, the ways we can get back up and look again to follow Jesus.

As you watch this fourth episode of Traveling the Way of Love, we invite you to take time this week to practice “turning.” Pause. Listen. Choose to follow Jesus. Consider the ways that both you and your community will turn to reorient yourselves toward God, like a flower turning to face the sun.

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After watching Traveling the Way of Love: Turn, consider engaging the Way of Love with one or more of these suggested practices.

**Turn**
In Holy Baptism, we turn and experience God’s grace and a reorientation of our life in the community of faith. Visit episcopalchurch.org/celebrating-baptism and watch the story of the Gregory family as they seek out a home church and explore the values they’ve found in their community—a community that promises to uphold their daughter, Anna, in her life of faith.

**Learn**
Read Mark 2:14 and meditate on its meaning for five minutes: As Jesus was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.

**Pray**
Pray this week for Thistle Farms—and its staff, its volunteers, the survivors who have experienced grace there, the community, and those trying to find their way home.

**Worship**
At worship this week, if there is a celebration of the Eucharist, say this excerpt of Eucharistic Prayer C, found on page 372 of the Book of Common Prayer: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

**Bless**
While we are not all called to create an organization like Thistle Farms, we are all called to forgive, to listen, to love, and to reorient our lives to the way of Jesus. This week, consider these questions: What is one action you can take to “turn”? Is there a conversation you need to have, a spiritual practice you need to dig into, or a behavior you need to reexamine? Make this the week that you bless yourself and your community by turning toward it.

**Go**
What would it look like to start a justice-oriented enterprise in your or your congregation’s region? Go into your community and listen for where the voice of God is calling you. Listen for God in the stories of people in the community, and consider how you may be called to lift up that loving presence—not only with your lips, but in your life.

**Rest**
After you’ve experienced your own “turn” this week, large or small, take time to pause and reflect. In reorienting, have you gotten a better glimpse of God? If so, consider how you can build on that turn in the future. If not, try that action for another week and find out whether a different turn is needed.

**OTHER RESOURCES:**

**Download** the Small Group Reflection Guide at bit.ly/TWOLturn and use it with your community.

**Listen** to the Way of Love podcast episode “Turn: Learning to Live Unselfishly” at wayoflove.episcopalchurch.org

**Discover** the life-changing work of Thistle Farms at thistlefarms.org

**Learn** more about the Way of Love at episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove