



## Now It's Our Turn

*TEXT*  
*Mark 6:6b-13*

November 22, 2015 — Sermon by Rev. Tom Are, Jr.

Last week our hearts were broken because Paris faced her 9/11, with 129 killed.

This week is it Mali, with reports of at least 20 killed.

The week before it was Egypt, with 224 who lost their lives somewhere above the clouds.

Before that, Beirut erupted with explosions, with the largest death toll they had had in years.

Last month two explosions rocked a Turkish peace rally, killing approximately 100.

On Friday a mother in our city was convicted of a collection of crimes because it was her practice to keep her 10-year-old daughter locked in a closet.

Episodes of racial tension and division and, too often, violence are bubbling up around us, making us aware that more of our yesterdays are with us today than we thought.

We live in a broken world.

Most troubling of all, the brokenness is not just limited to those out there. For all of us, there are those times when the trouble shows up in us. As I said to you a couple weeks ago, I have a tendency to mess

things up — often even those things I care about the most.

We live in a broken world. Today we are reminded of what we do about it.

Someone said to me this week, “With all the violence in Paris, I just don’t know what to do.”

Here’s what I’m doing. I am putting my pledge into that plate, and I am committing myself — because these are days that require commitment. I am committing myself to doing what I can to ensure that the church remains the church, that Village will be Village.

I thank Kim, Laura, Patty and Tedrick for summoning the courage to tell us what you have meant to them and how God has shown up in their lives because of you. If you were going to tell your story, what would it be?

They have reminded us that when the brokenness of the world shows up, we want the church to be the church. We want Village to be there because it makes a difference.

Many of us this week will take time to remember how blessed we are. The list of blessings is long.

But none of us escapes the storm. No one escapes heart-

break. The brokenness of the world comes to us. And when it does, we want Village to be Village.

I don’t know who it will be next year, but I know there will be the young among us bringing the littlest among us to be baptized. When they come, they will be sleep-deprived, and they will be overwhelmed with joy. They will also be a little afraid because these little ones are growing up in a world that is broken.

So it will make a difference when you keep the promise to be the church. It will make a difference when you live as a community where the little ones can learn that they are loved by God and by you.

There will be those who come to us next year, shattered because death has come, and they fear that the grief they carry will consume them. But you will be here with hymns and psalms. You will be here with hugs and stories of a life and stories of God. And in time, they will learn that resurrection shows up on both sides of the grave.

And there will be those who come to us next year because they are searching for that which can fill the hole in their

lives. And they will come because work doesn't fill it; and yoga doesn't quite do it; and vacations don't do it. And you will be here with friendship and prayer and room at the table and work to do to make a broken world better.

And there will be many whose names we will never know. But you will feed them, and serve them, and teach them, or help them find a job, or provide a listening ear. And the brokenness will be pushed back a bit. Village will be Village.

We live in a broken world. That's not new. Jesus sent his disciples out into this world to preach good news, to cast out demons, to heal. In essence, he sent them out to do what he would do; to live as he would live. And they did.

That's the point: They did. They didn't fix everything, but they were a force for good and for grace, for generosity and for justice, for healing and for hope. They were the church.

That's what they did. Now it's our time.

She said, "After Paris, I don't know what to do."

It may not seem like much, but the best thing I know to do is to do everything we can to ensure the church is the church, that Village is Village.

There have been better days in the world. There have been worse days. But these are our days. So in a world that is broken, we keep practicing the same things we did before.

We show wisdom by trusting people.

We handle leadership by serving.

We handle offenders by forgiving.

We handle money by sharing.

We handle enemies by loving.

In a world that is broken, we keep believing what we believed before:

That love is stronger than hate.

That generosity is a source of abundant life.

That justice will seek to make right that which can be made right.

And when it can't be made right, forgiveness will set the brokenness aside.

That even in the face of death, we are a people who know resurrection to be real.

So we will keep being the church. And if we do, there will be others who will tell stories like the ones we have heard today. They will talk of how God has shown up through you.

**This sermon was delivered at Village Presbyterian Church, 6641 Mission Road, Prairie Village, KS 66208.**

The sermon can be read, heard or seen on the church's Web site: [www.villagepres.org/sermons](http://www.villagepres.org/sermons).