

- I. Advanced Organizer
- A. Once again we're gonna start with a discussion question:
- 1. What do you think are the core components of trust? What elements are important in a relationship for you to find someone trustworthy?**
- B. Let's take a moment to see what you came up with.
- 1. Allow for various answers. Write them down on whiteboard.*
- C. This question that I posed to you has been a topic of much research and debate in the academic world over the last 30 or 40 years. Researchers and academics in fields like psychology, organizational management, international relations and so on have been trying to understand this elusive but vital thing we call trust. And after decades of back and forth, in 2007 a **researcher named Dr. Shawn Burke at the University of Florida** published her analysis of the core components of trust, which seems to have largely settled the debate. Academics over the last 15 years or so have been building their understanding of trust and how to cultivate it on her formula.
- D. Dr. Burke describes trust being made up of what she calls three pillars. And the three pillars are these: **Ability, integrity and benevolence**. Let's consider these briefly and you might think about how some of the things you said directly or indirectly connect with them.
- 1. Ability** - sometimes called competency instead. This is about does someone actually have the capacity to do the thing we're working on together. You might think I'm a lovely person and friend, but it probably wouldn't be wise to trust me to say build you a house. That's not something I have real competency in. The point is it's hard to trust someone to share a task with you, even forming a friendship, if they don't have any real skills or ability to bring to that endeavor.
 - 2. Integrity** - also sometimes called honesty. Does the person demonstrate over time that not only do they have some skills or competency you can trust in, but they also are honest and reliable. Does this person have a track record of following through, of showing up when they say they're gonna show up? Can you believe what they say to the best of their knowledge accurate? Or do you have sense that you might not be getting the full story from them?
 - 3. Benevolence** - this one is what I think is then most interesting, particularly coming from the world of management and psychology. This speaks to how a person is concerned with the well-being of others. In fact the word "benevolent" comes from two Latin words which put together means "wishing well". Does someone wish the best for others? Are they kind, thoughtful, caring? Or do they seem to be mostly self-concerned?
 - So according to Dr. Burke and others in her community, these three pillars are the core components of trust: ability, integrity and benevolence.
- E. Well, I start with this conversation because this is the second teaching in a series I'm calling "Let's Collab"; a series that invites us to consider together some of the elements we might focus on as we continue to grow in collaboration this year and into the future. Two weeks ago I started the series by inviting us to consider a potential first step in the process of growing in collaboration - what I called "getting humble". Recognizing our need for one another, and trying to lay down places of power is an important beginning in collaborating.
- F. And **I think the work of building trust might be the next step in the process**. We need trust in one another to collaborate well, to feel safe while we do so. So **how do we go about building that trust**, particularly with folks who might share a variety of experiences, cultural backgrounds, personal needs, and so on? I think that's an ongoing complicated work that can't be done in one morning, but I do think there are insights we might take not only from the

academic world, but also from our sacred texts, as well as the wisdom of our own experiences that can direct the effort. So that's what I hope to explore a bit more today.

- G. **Jesus was not interested in being a solo-act.** Jesus was seeking collaborators. He wanted folks to do the stuff with him. So how did he build trust with those he collaborated with?
 - H. No doubt many of you are likely familiar with some of the stories in the gospels of **Jesus "calling" his first disciples** into collaboration. The way some of the gospel writers describe this, Jesus just walks up to total strangers, like a few fisherman on the side of a lake, and says, "follow me", and immediately they drop their nets and follow. They jump in - no questions asked. It seems like blind faith, and it can feel pretty incomprehensible to us if we're honest.
 - I. But **not all the gospel writers tell the story the same way.** Whereas Mark and Matthew present things basically as I've described, **Luke arranges his account a bit differently.** He takes more time. He varies the order of things a bit. He narrows the focus from a group of fishermen, to paying particular attention to Jesus' relations with one of them: Simon, who'd be eventually known as Peter. While there are a number of ways we could interpret the differences, today I thought it might be interesting to read the familiar story again **through the lens of trust-building.** Let's look at how Jesus was encountering Simon Peter as they were becoming collaborators and as we do, look for the ways he may have been operating to build trust with him, perhaps considering where we see elements of ability, integrity, or benevolence, or whatever other components of trust you resonate with.
- II. We'll begin the story at the end of Chapter 4 in Luke. The setup here is that Jesus has just returned from his time in the desert after his baptism, and from there he began preaching in synagogues. In his home synagogue in Nazareth folks felt infuriated by this prophet preaching to his hometown and drove him away. And so he **made his way to the town of Capernaum**, about 20 miles from Nazareth, a coastal town on the Sea of Galilee. And after preaching in their synagogue, where he spectacularly cast a demon out of someone, we pick up the story later that day.
- A. 38 After Jesus left the synagogue, he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So he stood over her, commanded the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them.**

40 As the sun was setting, all those who had any relatives sick with various diseases brought them to Jesus. He placed his hands on every one of them and healed them.

41 Demons also came out of many, crying out, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ....

5 Now Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret [another name for the Sea of Galilee], and the crowd was pressing around him to hear the word of God. 2 He saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then Jesus sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing! But at your word I will lower the nets." 6 When they had done this, they

caught so many fish that their nets started to tear. 7 So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they were about to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9 For Peter and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's business partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people!" 11 So when they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

- B. OK, so we have this familiar story; a story about how Jesus and Simon Peter became collaborators. But what I think is interesting about how Luke tells the story, by the time Peter and his friends leave their nets and boats to follow Jesus, **a number of things have taken place**; things that might explain how they were able to do that. It seems like at least a degree of trust has been built. So how did Jesus potentially model building trust? I'm gonna briefly draw our attention to a few things I see that could be relevant for us in building trust. I'll mostly refer to Simon Peter as Simon here, as this part of the story does, though later Jesus will give him a new name and he'll be eventually known as Peter.

1. Jesus gets personal with Simon.

- a) Often when I've studied this story or heard it preached, the story picks up at the scene by the water. But as you can see from what we read, the way Luke tells the story, the story of Jesus and Simon Peter actually starts *before* Jesus comes to the lake. **Before Jesus ever was a guest in Simon's boat, he'd already been a guest in his house.** Simon was the one who hosted Jesus for dinner right after Jesus amazed folks in their community at the synagogue, preaching and then casting out a demon. Not only did Jesus come over for dinner, while he was there, he healed Simon's sick mother-in-law. From these short verses we learn that not only was Simon Peter a married man, something we rarely ever consider in a lot of our conversations about him and his ministry, but we see that from the beginning of their connection, Jesus was connecting with the intimate, personal part of his life. Jesus was connecting with his home life, with his family life. Jesus was literally there, in Simon's home, showing up and attending to the intimate personal needs in Simon Peter's life. **He was benevolent to Simon and his family from the beginning.**
- b) Hanging out in people's homes isn't a one-off thing for Jesus, it's clearly something he does with many of the folks he's building relationship with. When Jesus reaches out to a tax-collector named Levi, that night he's eating dinner at his home, much to the chagrin of a number of the religious people around him. Same thing happens when he meets the tax-collector Zacchaeus; he invites himself over to dine at his home that evening. Significant encounters with his close friends Mary and Martha happen when he's a guest in their home, in the midst of their day-to-day sisterly dynamics. **Jesus isn't strictly business with his collaborators, he gets personal, most often embodied by sharing meals with people.** And this model of connecting and building trust was something people like Simon Peter and other leaders in the early church carried forward. Their Sunday gatherings took place in homes where they shared meals, sang songs, shared the teachings and stories of Jesus, and prayed. **A core part of the dynamic was being involved in one another's personal lives,** in what

happens in their homes, in their families, with their partners. They could live into benevolence and integrity regularly.

2. The second thing I notice Jesus doing as he's building trust with Simon Peter is this:

Jesus partners with Simon.

- a) Jesus invites Simon to collaborate on a task with him - the task of helping the gathering crowd hear his teaching. Likely the reason Jesus chose to stand in a boat a bit out on the water was both pragmatic and acoustic. Pragmatically, it gave some natural distance between Jesus and the crowd so everyone could see and he had a little space to himself. But it also was probably acoustically helpful, as Jesus voice would have bounced off the water and towards the crowd, amplifying it. It was Jesus' spontaneous waterside amphitheater. But Jesus couldn't create this amphitheater alone. He needed a collaborator who had unique skills and tools. So Jesus asked Simon if he could use his boat, and Simon apparently consented. **Jesus and Simon partnered together in a distinct task, each of them getting the opportunity to offer what they had to the project.** They each had unique abilities to contribute - Jesus brought the words to be shared and the people they needed to be shared with. Simon Peter brought the means. Both skillsets have dignity and usefulness.
 - b) Again, this seems to be a regular part of Jesus M.O. - reaching out to folks and finding moments of collaboration in small, distinct tasks, honoring the contributions of others and incorporating them in collaborative ways. He asks a woman with a bucket by a well for a drink of water. He works with a boy who has five loaves of bread and two fish to feed a multitude. And he clearly expects the followers he's training to operate in similar ways. He sends them out to practice ministering to others in pairs - he wants them to collaborate on the task, and also to partner with the folks they meet along the way, accepting hospitality where it's offered, allowing that hospitality to be a place of connection, and contribute towards building trust with one another.
3. This brings me to a third and final way I see Jesus interacting with Simon that builds trust.
Jesus honors Simon's cultural experience.
 - a) While relationship and likely some trust are being built between Jesus and Simon Peter from the moment Jesus enters his living room, it's not the miraculous healings in Simon's home or the amazing authoritative preaching of Jesus that cause Simon to drop to his knees. It's the miracle that takes place in Simon's own cultural language - when Jesus enters his world and blesses him beyond what he can imagine there. Simon is moved to worship and yes to trust and follow Jesus, **when Jesus goes fishing with him.**
 - b) Jesus isn't a fisherman. I'm guessing when he asked Simon Peter to go fishing again, after Simon had just had a frustrating night on the water and not caught anything, after he had already cleaned his nets and hung around to help Jesus' amplification project, Simon very well may have been feeling a bit annoyed. This carpenter might have chops as a teacher and a healer, but what does he know about fishing? Still, out of respect for the guy who just healed his wife's mom, and maybe to save face in front of the crowds, he humors him. He takes him fishing. And he is stunned when this is where Jesus' divinity is truly revealed. The catch is beyond anything any of them have experienced. It doesn't just blow Simon Peter away, his partners James and John are stunned too. They've never seen anything like it; they know this can only be a manifestation of God.
 - c) Simon Peter is immediately overcome. He falls at Jesus feet, urging him to get away because Simon feels so convicted that he is sinful, unworthy of sharing space with someone so close to God. But **Jesus doesn't see Simon that way. He sees capacity,**

promise, potential in Simon Peter. And he speaks to him of that by again speaking the language of Simon's cultural experience: "From now on you will be catching people". Jesus isn't asking Simon to become a rabbi or become a carpenter to follow him. He's inhabiting Simon's culture as a fisherman and honoring it; inviting him as a fisherman into the collaborative project he's cultivating.

- d) In the same way, **as we build trust, we also have the opportunity to honor one another's cultural experiences.** That might mean inviting one another's professional identities into our collaboration. It might mean learning about and engaging with other's interests in entertainment, in media usage, in food. It might be about style of communication, even honoring the reality that what folks actually need to build trust to feel benevolence or integrity can be personal and cultural, and we may need to listen and be willing to connect in new ways to honor our collaborative partners if their needs are different than our own.
- e) **Dr. Jeanne Brett and Dr. Tyree Mitchell** are two more recent researchers in the topic of trust, folks who've built their work upon Dr. Burke's. The specific area of trust that Brett and Mitchell have been researching is **how culture impacts the capacity to trust.** In conversations with managers around the globe, they found that different leaders in different parts of the world approached building trust in different ways. Some folks in North America and Northern Europe are quick to trust, assuming their partner is competent until proven otherwise. Other managers in places like Latin America or Southeast Asia, are slower to trust in business relationships, and **need time socializing with folks outside of work before trust can be built.** They need to cultivate a sense of the person's benevolence and integrity. Others in East Asia might want to vet their business partner's competence, learn about their reputation from others they already trust. The point is that **there's not one right way to build trust but that we need to honor one another's needs and be willing to learn and adapt to them.**

III. So what does all this mean for us at Haven?

- A. I think in the day-to-day of cultivating spiritual community, there are multiple opportunities for getting personal, for partnering on tasks together and for honoring one another's cultural experiences. All of these can be components of building the pillars of trust with one another, just as they were for Jesus and his collaborators. But I want to end with **a pitch for one particular practice** I think we can continue to grow in as community, and I would love to collaborate with any of you who are interested in growing it.
 - 1. Some of us in this community have in the past or are currently engaged in some sort of **small community group outside of our Sunday time with Haven.** Cultivating community groups has been something we've been working on and iterating in different ways through the years, sometimes more fruitfully than others. There are challenges of our quirky community - distance being a big one, that can make finding rhythms of gathering outside of these few Sundays a month challenging. And of course folks have busy lives and conflicting schedules that add to the challenge.
 - 2. But for those of us who have participated in these groups, whether they be ones that are ongoing over the course of years, or groups that are time bound for a few months and then conclude, making space for others; those of us who've participated I think have consistently found that these smaller spaces, sometimes within one another's homes, **help us get personal, work together, enter one another's cultural experiences in ways that are different than in a bigger group.**

3. So as we look to a new season coming, I ask you to consider, if you're not currently a part of an ongoing community group, **what kind of group might you be interested in this fall?** A group that meets in someone's home? A group that meets online? Is there a topic or theme you might be interested in exploring with others? Is there an ability or competency you have to bring to cultivating that space? Are you open to partnering with another in facilitating a space or hosting a space? How can we as a community move toward having regular opportunities for most if not all of us to be interacting with a consistent group of people outside of the Sunday experience? And as that happens, how might the trust we build in those settings contribute to the bigger thing all of us are collaborating in together?
4. I'm not here coming with a proposal and a set of groups for you to sign up for right now. I'm hoping we might create that together. If you have an idea for a group you'd like to see happen this fall, I'd love to hear about it and we can discern together, perhaps with others about how it becomes a reality. In all of this, I hope we can continue to grow in building trust with one another that multiplies exponentially, just as it did with the one we follow. Amen.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Does Dr. Burke's formula for trustworthiness (trustworthiness = ability x integrity x benevolence) match your own experience of trust? Why or why not?
2. How have the practices Jesus engaged in building trust with Simon Peter (getting personal, partnering, and honoring another's cultural experience) shown up in your own relationships?
3. How have you found small groups helpful for building trust? What kind of groups do you imagine or hope for in Haven going forward?