

We can embrace our humanness, which means embracing our broken natures and the compassion that remains our best hope for healing. Or we can deny our brokenness, forswear compassion, and, as a result, deny our own humanity.

—Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*



THURSDAY, MARCH 9

Embracing brokenness and learning compassion are not easy tasks. While working with people imprisoned on death row and children sentenced to life in prison, lawyer and social justice activist Bryan Stevenson learned that when the brokenness of others meets the brokenness inside you, there are two options: compassionate action or numb neglect.

Compassion is a different kind of knowing: the willingness to let another's pain teach you how to love and work for justice. Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians that our actions sound like ugly noises when they are done without love. We cannot love other people until we know and understand their pain.

Often when painful feelings arise, we seek out distraction. This Lent let yourself feel all the emotions, even the unpleasant ones. You are safe, held in the presence of our God who sees, knows and loves you.

Who we love matters. Who we love changes us. Together, we can expand our capacity for compassion and find healing for ourselves and our world.

—Lindsey Briggs