

Dear Friends,

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. As many of you know (or not), I grew up in a small town in North Dakota and our graduation class size was just six, four boys and two girls. Just over 10 years ago, my mom called and said that one of my classmates was killed by her ex (husband or boyfriend, I don't know). She was trying to get away from him and he chased her down and shot her in the back with a shotgun. No matter how small or large a class you graduated with, I do imagine that many of you have a story to share. Your classmate may not have been killed, but possibly they got away from an abusive relationship or family and are free, maybe they got away and can't stop running, maybe they have been unsuccessful or have forgotten there is a possibility of freedom.

Back in the 1950's when cops were called for domestic violence, they saw their job as to get the abused (often the wife) to forgive and take him back for the sake of the family and the marriage. That still hovers over us in harmful and even deadly ways. If there is abuse, and the abuser has not taken any real steps to change their behavior, their attitude, and their relationships with those they are abusing, then they should not be a part of that family until they do. Most abusers should be imprisoned, or at least monitored, because they are often a continued threat to everyone, especially their family.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, "Love is patient, love is kind, love is not arrogant, envious, or rude. Love does not insist on its own way. It does not rejoice in falsehood but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love."

The abused do not provoke the abuse, the abuser doesn't know restraint, compassion, or taking responsibility for their own actions. May we create that community, nation, and world where domestic violence is called out, stopped, and the families are taught abuse is not love and has no part of a healthy community. Let us support our local Violence Prevention Center and model what true love looks like.

Peace
Pastor Enno