

The Gift of Excuses
By Rev. Todd Farnsworth

Jeremiah 1: 4-10



4 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew[a] you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” 6 “Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” 7 But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. 9 Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

From the earliest days of faith, everyone had an excuse!

OT:

Abraham and Sarah: We're too old!

Moses: I'm not a good public speaker

Isaiah: There is no hope for me! My words are sinful!

Jeremiah: I'm too young

Samuel: Is that really you, God?

Jonah: They don't deserve God's blessing...

NT:

Paul: I don't believe you are God.

There was always an excuse...and God always came back with a
"Yeah, yeah, yeah... but I love you anyway. Now get to work."

Over the summer we explored a variety of spiritual practices ranging from music, reading, nature, movies, gratitude, etc.

Each one of the meditations was a calling to you. It was an invitation to draw closer to God...to connect more deeply with Holiness. Which is in and of itself a good thing...right? And yet, you probably heard folks making excuses as to why they weren't going to even try the practices that were presented.

I wonder, what excuses have you heard OTHER people use for not trying these practices?

(list on poster paper)

Too hard

Don't like it

Might do it wrong

No time

Not into it.

Others?

Well, this is our final Sunday of practices, and to help you finish the summer on a high note, on this final Sunday of *Staying Connected* I'd like to introduce you to *the gift of excuses*.

- *Excuses* name what we are afraid of, or uncomfortable with. We often think of them as something bad or prohibiting, but allow me to reframe excuses as a confession to God of what we lack...(look at the list we compiled).
- *Excuses* are a perception of our personal limits.
- Excuses are an expression of the tension we feel between what we think we are and who God knows us to be.
- Excuses are a confession of things we don't think, don't believe we can accomplish on our own...and we may be right about that! We may not be able to overcome the things we confess all by ourselves.

Fortunately, we *don't* have to do it alone!

We live in God's presence.

We who practice the Christian faith, have Jesus and the Holy Spirit to call on when we are at a loss.

Even in the face of excuses, God can bless us.

To help us experience that blessing of excuses, I would like to teach you a practice called Tapping prayer.

Some of you have experienced this form of confession with me in private pastoral care. Let's try it now as a group with the issues that are up here on this list.

Choose the parts of list that you resonate with. Give them a number 0-10 for truth. How strongly do you resonate with the excuse on the list with regards to trying a spiritual practice? OK? Got that number?

Let's tap. We'll tap on the places I show you while we pray. We tap on these places because they have been shown to be the gateway to path that the Holy Spirit uses to heal us.

We tap here: karate, head, eyebrows, outer eye, under eye, over lips, under lips, clavicle, under arms, wrists.

And we pray. You follow along like follow the leader. You can make up your own prayer at home...

Let's confess/pray/tap on the gift of excuses....

After tap: check number. How strong is that excuse you were stuck on regarding trying a new spiritual practice? Up, down, same?

If number has not gone down to 2 or less, what do you think is keeping it up? What aspects of the excuse remain?

Tap on those aspects...

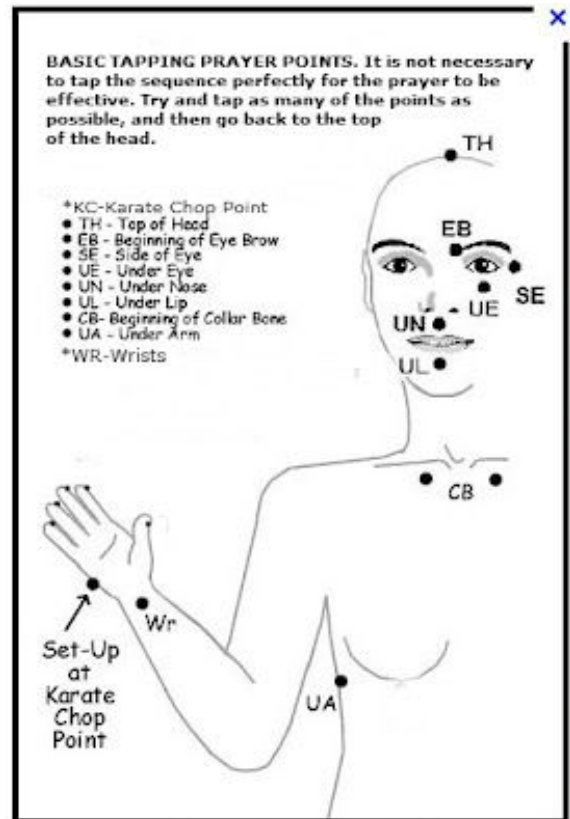
Excuses can be stumbling blocks to our faith...or we can recognize them as opportunities to direct God's healing to the issues they represent. Tapping prayer can be applied to any of those issues. We can confess, as people of faith have been doing since the beginning of time, that even though we can't do it all on our own, we are deeply loved and completely accepted by God.

I have been asked to create a tapping prayer group this Fall and I will do that in October. Stay tuned to our bulletins, newsletter, website, etc for details as they become available. I hope you'll join me...or at least have a good excuse. Amen.

INTRO TO TAPPING PRAYER

Basic Recipe

- Decide on an issue to focus on. Rate the issue on a scale of 0-10 regarding how upsetting the issue is to you. This is important, because later on it will help you assess the shifting of the Spirit, and if/where there are other area around the issue that need healing.
- Offer a prayer of awareness and thanksgiving in anticipation of the healing
- Set up statement...Even though...
- Affirming statement...I am deeply loved and completely accepted by God.
 - NOTE: some people do not believe this to be true, in which case you need to modify this statement to something they can believe such as, " I can consider being fully loved and deeply accepted by God/the Holy/Jesus...." or "I deserve to be deeply loved and completely accepted by the Holy."
- Begin tapping through points on body while saying this statement.
 - Karate chop x 3
 - Top of head
 - eyebrow
 - outer eye
 - under eye
 - under nose
 - under lip
 - collarbone
 - under arm
 - wrists
- Second time through, start at top of head and just use set up phrase on all points. Add details re: issue
- Third time through, alternate set up phrase with affirming phrase. End with affirming phrase on top of head.
- End with a deep breath and a word of thanks to the Holy for working to bring your soul toward peace.,
- Evaluate on a scale of 1-10 how the issue feels to you. Note any residual issues that might have come up during the tapping prayer. Ask God to guide you in tapping on those issues.



*Additional Resources: www.tappingintoprayer.org eftuniverse.com, thetappingsolution.com

I am available for individual tapping prayer as well as group demonstrations in your community. Please contact me at tapping.into.prayer.now@gmail.com for more information about scheduling tapping prayer.