



Grain

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” St. Mark

Field

“The longer I try to participate in God's redeeming work in the world the more I am convinced despite my proclivity to cynicism that there are indeed forces that seek to defy God. And nowhere are we more prone to encroaching darkness than when we are stepping into the light. If you have ever experienced sudden discouragement in the midst of healthy decisions, or if there is a toxic thought that will always send you spiraling down, or if there is a particular temptation that is your weakness then I make the following suggestion: take a note from Martin Luther's playbook and defiantly shout back at this darkness ‘I am Baptized.’” Nadia Bolz-Weber

Thoughts

Happy New Year!

One time when I was a teenager my cousin and I were paging through a family album commenting on all the familiar characters who helped to form our family identity. We came to a photo of one man whose face I had never seen before. He was disheveled and appeared intoxicated; he looked like he might have been drunk a lot. I asked my cousin, whose mother was my mother's sister, “Is he from your dad's side?” She laughed. “No, our mothers’. Don't try to escape.” It was a light conversation, but actually it is a good idea not to avoid the truth, to face what we can be proud of as well as what disappoints or gnaws at us in our families. But what if I would dig further? Would I find people who had committed atrocities at some in my family history? Would I discover greatness? Would it matter?

What about the history of our church family? Martin Luther and other reformers cut through tired Medieval values and made a profound impact on the church and western civilization. At the same time, Luther was an embarrassing anti-Semite. How does all of this impact our identities? We don't ignore it. However, who we are and how we live are not dependent on any other individual. In the waters of our baptism we find our identity in belonging to Christ. Baptism is powerful. The identity we find as sons and daughters of God breaks through other label levels and gives us more confidence to not remain silent when surrounded by injustice.

Let us begin the New Year remembering the grace of belonging our through baptism. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy