



Grain

“We don’t know the how, but we know the Who.”

Unknown author

Submitted by Jean Hays, Sparta, WI

Field.

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." John 1:45-46

Thoughts

Years ago on a Saturday night when I was at a friend’s going away party in Minnesota, I began talking to someone who said she was from Madison. I told her that I grew up in Milwaukee until age 14 and then went to high school in Adams. She gasped. “Can anything good come out of Adams?” I was a bit stunned. Sure Adams had a reputation I guess but it was a sleepy little town I called home for four years and where I made some good friends. I thought, really, you talk to people this way? Now you may wonder if I’m inventing a convenient tale, but I swear that the very next day in church, the Gospel reading was from John and included the words, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” I laughed. The question was suddenly a spiritual exercise in realizing how seriously we take ourselves and limit one another over small concerns. However, it is more difficult to get to the laughter when we are trudging through layers of limitations we impose upon groups of people over generations.

Many churches will use St. John’s lesson next Sunday, the day before our nation commemorates the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a giant in breaking through systems of racism that the best of us have participated in without thinking. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? If we see Nazareth as groups of people discriminated against, we recognize systems built upon the answer, No. We are still overcoming the No, which Dr. King and countless others with the grace of God have helped to cut through. The No is still with us as long as leaders such as Erica Garner die young reaching for justice. In response to Garner’s death, Rozella White, former ELCA Director for Young Adult Ministry said, “As a black woman, I’m thinking about all that I carry or have been forced to endure that is threatening to kill me. And I am putting it down. We are fighting for our lives... We are fighting against the powers and principalities that would seek to suffocate us.” More in her [blog](#). I think of the system I was born in to, and I wonder about how I’ve limited people without reflection and about public policies coded to exclude. Dr. King pointed to Jesus and the who of who created and interlinked us all.

Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Sometimes the question sparks my laughter, at other times my confession and our need for grace. How about for you? Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to cindyc@loppw.org

All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at www.loppw.org

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy