



Grain

“For God is the God of bodies.” Dr. Wanda Deifelt

Field

21 They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. 22 They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, 24 and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him." Mark 1:21-26

Thoughts

Jesus' first public act in St. Mark was to exorcise someone. As he preached, the man cried out for help or to be left alone or maybe both, as we can sometimes do when we need healing but want our demons and blind spots to be remain undisturbed. In reaching out to the afflicted, a person considered to be impure, Jesus crossed the boundary of purity and expanded our understanding of the Kingdom of God.

At the most recent Forgotten Luther Symposium, Dr. Wanda Diefelt of Luther College talked about how we have emphasized saving souls over bodies in so much of Christian history. She discussed the clash between two world views in Christianity: the Semitic belief in the body made in the image of God with purity laws to protect us and the Greco-Roman view of the body as a prison for the soul. "What if we cared more about saving bodies?" Diefelt also explored hierarchies of bodies throughout history when asking of whose bodies matter. She had us consider the sexual exploitation of women, black and brown bodies imprisoned at a high rate, aging and ill bodies punished, and health care treated as a privilege rather than a human right. I thought of hearing a Catholic sister share her experience of working with men in a "John" school after they got caught purchasing sex. She said she was startled to hear men say that before the class they never thought of prostitutes as human beings.

Jesus cared about healing and feeding bodies. Dr. Martin Luther, advocate of the poor, knew that and responded to economic injustice. May the presence of the holy embody you, bring you healing, and expand our vision of whose bodies matter. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy