



### **Grain**

“Jesus didn’t die because he wanted to die. He died because he wanted to live.” Dr. Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ

### **Field**

<sup>31</sup>Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." <sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." <sup>35</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. Mark 8:31-35

### **Thoughts**

In Japan, where less than 1% of the population is Christian, I met people who struggled with whether or not to be baptized. They were drawn to the Christian faith but anguished over how publically claiming their identity as baptized Christians would displace them within their own culture. Would they become disenfranchised among their family, friends and co-workers? Their challenges seemed to mirror those of the early disciples. Jesus didn’t invite or encourage anyone to become displaced but he knew that as his followers deepened their identities beyond how they were defined on their label levels or via their usual connections they would sometimes encounter the cross.

In the U.S., we don’t usually risk becoming “other” for identifying as Christian, and it’s not our goal to, but we can experience being displaced at times in how we live out our baptism. Witnessing from our core can lead to positive change, even to being popular, but can also draw us to the cross. What will I claim, for example, to protect children and what will be the result? Will I say the gun industry is justified selling military weapons, and when people who want better regulations get their words twisted, will I go along? When children are being raped daily, will I laugh at jokes about porn and an industry of sex trafficking based on lies about how so many are brought into “prostitution” and the ages of the ones called “fresh” put up for sale? When money is taken out of budgets to protect those most vulnerable, will I turn a blind eye? Maybe, but with grace our eyes are opened and our witness is deepened, and sometimes that leads to being other. Take up your cross and follow me are words that point us to our identity as baptized people in Christ who want to live fully and freely. Happy Monday!

### **Prayer**

Highly recommended.

### **Share**

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to [cindyc@loppw.org](mailto:cindyc@loppw.org)

All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at [www.loppw.org](http://www.loppw.org)

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy