



Grain

“Faith in Christ does not free us from works but false opinions concerning works, that is from the foolish presumption that justification is acquired by works.”
Cynthia Moe-Lobeda

Field

“--by grace you have been saved-- 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God-- 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” Ephesians 2:4b-10

Thoughts

Can we hear about grace too much? Well, I thought so at first during my internship many years ago. My supervisor and senior pastor, Kal, talked about grace all the time; he could hardly get through half of a sermon without mentioning it. I didn't disagree with anything he said, but I had a mixed relationship with grace language by that time in my life. So often when I uttered words such as “social justice,” “advocacy,” or “contemplation” at seminary another student would raise their voice in defense: “But we're saved by grace.” Is this an argument? Is it either or? I realize the pendulum can swing in the other direction as well.

One Sunday when I wasn't preaching I was particularly moved by Kal's sermon, in which he of course talked about grace. I thought about when I was on a leave of absence from seminary and recalled how meaningful it was to live at a retreat center for one year, but also about how I struggled with not feeling spiritual enough. There are so many ways in which we can with judgment believe we should be more than what we are. What wakes us up or introduces a conversion? A talk, a book, a sermon, a friend, a loss, or an illness that suddenly puts everything in perspective in a visceral way? Somehow hearing about grace that day not only told me what I intellectually knew, but the Holy Spirit affected my vision. Any form of prayer or our working for justice as individuals or a community is not about gritting our teeth and trying to be enough. We begin with being enough in Christ. We need reminders of that and by grace our understanding receives adjustments.

Maybe we can't hear about grace too much. What do you think? Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy