



Monday Quotes

Grain

“If a policy is wrongheaded, feckless and corrupt, I take it personally and consider it a moral obligation to sound off and not shut up until it’s fixed.” David Hackworth

Submitted by Jan Levine Thal, Madison, WI

Field

30 He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." 33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples. Mark 4:20-24

Thoughts

Where is the power in the mustard seed parable, and what’s with all the mystery? Why didn’t Jesus just spill out an explanation to the crowd, and be clear like David Hackworth is in his quote? Reading parables can be like absorbing poetry; they are writings that engage our minds and cause us to reach for meaning more than a direct explanation would cause us to do, but Jesus did explain the parable in private to his disciples. So, what’s going on? The text embraces layers of interpretations. Maybe Jesus was talking to people stuck in oppressive systems that had been normalized; they wouldn’t swiftly alter their views even if they were not benefiting from the structures. Richard Rohr said Jesus kept certain of his teachings hidden because some people would twist the truth and use what they heard for evil.

Have you ever kept simple information from someone because you thought they might use it against you in a bullying way? People practicing abusive behavior will twist what they hear, intimidate, and take other short cuts to get ahead that hurt someone else. However, even if we don’t have a penchant toward bullying, we have all diminished what God loves and have fallen into temptations to do harm.

Jesus elevated a seed that grows into a sort of weed that thrives in fields. Was that a joke? Weed-like shrubs may provide shelter for animals but if they appear around our homes, they spread into our groomed yards and consciousness until we get rid of them. The power of grace in the places we’ve been trained not to find it can be intrusive. Shh, I have a secret about power, Jesus tells us. It’s difficult and beautiful. That power is subversive and is spreading; it sustains us when it is time to exercise our public voice with clarity, naming behaviors and policies that should alter, and leads us to forgiveness when we need to change. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly Recommended

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy