



Monday Quotes

Grain

“Seeds must be sown everywhere. Only some will bear fruit. But there would not be the fruit from the few had the many not been sown.” Rabbi Chaim Potok

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

Field

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... 41 Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven'?" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. John 6:35, 41-45

Thoughts

Whenever I read, “the Jews” in scripture I try to remember to change it to “the authorities” or “the people,” or “those in power” unless we talk about it. John was not part of the majority religion, and as so often in history, whichever religion was in the minority be it Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Paganism, etc., it was an easy target for persecution. John looked back at Jesus through the lens of a vulnerable community that was fed by the bread of life through Jesus and from which some fell away. The people grumbling were part of the same culture as those who weren’t. Later, John’s way of separating the followers of Jesus from the other Jews, who were in power, took on an anti-Semitic life of its own in societies where Judaism was a minority. Getting lost in certain particulars in scripture can move us away from its message. I’m thankful to those who’ve helped us to separate theological truth from cultural bias even when few seemed to listen. God continues to share love in our contexts, regardless of who discerns it. “...there would not be the fruit from the few had the many not been sown.”

What would the New Testament addressed to Christians living as part of a majority religion look like? How would a Gospel writer portray the meaning of the bread of life in the United States? I think we’d be warned about the seduction of using religion to condone prejudices and allowing powerful entities to co-opt the Bible. We’d hear of the value of learning from other faiths while deepening our own. We wouldn’t get gaslighting claims about Christianity being a persecuted religion because we can’t legally discriminate; those grumbings would be reserved for people who wanted to escalate their political power and for wounded individuals misdirecting their rage. Or, would the word, “Christians” be used synonymously with those in power? As in John’s community, anyone can self-select out of following a life of love. Anyone can return. As imperfect people, we need the bread of life to discern love in the present, and that bread is a gift for you. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly Recommended

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy