



Grain

“God is closest to those with broken hearts.” Jewish Proverb

Field

32 When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the religious leaders who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34 He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus began to weep... 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." John 11:32-35; 41-44

Thoughts

How many times have you begun a sentence with “If only I had” or if only someone else had or hadn’t? If only they had not said that... If only I had not been silent... If only I tried to talk to her one more time before she died. If only I had not taken that job. If only my candidate would have been elected. If only I had waited longer things would be different.

“If only” can create an echo chamber within your mind. What if we take a few breaths, pause in the “if only” and name it as a part of our grief?

"Lord, if you had been here..." He wasn't and that couldn't change, but letting the words spill from her mouth was part of Mary's grieving. Jesus entered into her mourning and that of the community. He revealed his own deep emotions and then challenged the boundaries between life and death with new promise. Jesus brought Lazarus back, but not to a community with business as usual. People received a vision of a new relationship to life through Jesus. Some marveled in joy, others plotted his death, but even the latter would not stop the promise God offered.

Some laments resound throughout society. The murders at the Tree of Life Synagogue point us beyond the individual who terrorized a Jewish community to a world still riddled with anti-Semitism.

In our private and public lives of faith, what will emerge from facing our personal “if only” laments and the broader ones? What action will we take? What new life will we find? Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy