

Monday Quotes



Grain

“Contempt is the key.” Barbara Coloroso

Field

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." 10 And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" 11 In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" 13 He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." 14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." Luke 3:7-14

Thoughts

Such a buildup John the Baptist had to tell the crowd to practice simple acts of kindness. What was ingrained in the people's mindset that caused John to accuse them of being a brood of vipers and warn them to not even think about using their ancestors to justify themselves? No bragging about family pedigree near the River Jordan. But was he claiming it was wrong to be proud of one's lineage? Probably not. Was John concerned about their feeling entitled because of their ancestry, entitled to mistreat others? Likely so. For John, loving one's neighbor wasn't abstract or limited.

Barbara Coloroso in her book, *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander* claims that entitlement is one of the elements of contempt, "a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect." Contempt allows us to mistreat others without guilt or empathy. She talks about how individuals can practice Christian behavior in general but will alter when engaging with a person or group for whom they feel contempt. That makes me question where my own blind spots are. And how do I respond when I witness someone's tirade against an entire group of people? I've heard ordinarily generous people refer to asylum seekers in the caravan as animals and terrorists. How can we even hold a discussion and respect our differences of opinions about immigration reform without the common ground of recognizing immigrants as children of God?

What language do we hear that draws us away from love? Perhaps sometimes we need to step back from the fine points of arguments to unearth contempt. Can we begin with the belief that asylum seekers are children of God, fellow struggling human beings? John the Baptist's warning was basic and ageless. Better watch it. Repent, be forgiven, and be kind. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy