



Grain

“When we look for what’s best in the person we happen to be with at the moment, we’re doing what God does, so in appreciating our neighbor, we’re participating in something truly sacred.” —Fred Rogers (Mister Rogers)

Field

A lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell into the hands of robbers. A priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds. Which of these, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:25-37

Thoughts - Thank you to Hunger Advocacy Fellow Kelsey Johnson for her thoughts!

Who is your neighbor? Jesus commands us to see and care for one another. In the Gospel story, Jesus leaves out the details of who exactly a neighbor is as intentionally ambiguous. The man’s specific identity isn’t important in this instance; all people are our neighbors. In the world, though, there are barriers we have created to acting out our command to being compassionate neighbors. When our federal law classifies some of our neighbors as “illegal” are they therefore undeserving of dignity, care, and safety? Or, is the response to meet our neighbors in the figurative ditch?

I recently participated in civil disobedience at the ICE detention center in Milwaukee. The ask was simple: show up, wait for the signal from the community organizers, stand in front of the garage door, block whatever vehicles try to enter or exit the facility. Oh, and possibly get arrested. I carry a lot of privilege as a white U.S. citizen. I do not have to worry about being detained for immigration-related issues, I don’t know the trauma of family separation, I am not negatively racially profiled, and I do not have a long and complicated pathway to citizenship. No matter where you may stand on pathways to U.S. citizenship or borders, fundamentally we are called by God to care for our global neighbors. This includes absolutely all people, and means offering basic dignity and respect for the human beings navigating any part of the U.S. immigration system.

Jesus wasn’t arrested because he was trying to earn social activist likes on Facebook, 1-up his friends at seminary, or be the edgiest preacher among his young adult friends. Jesus also didn’t decide to avoid arrest by getting quiet when he was asked to by the empire. We have human systems to navigate. Some things I’ve been contemplating from my experience are: How do some human laws create walls to meeting our less privileged neighbor? How do we align our human laws with God’s law to create a just and equal society? There are not easily answered questions over a Monday morning cup of coffee. I am not advocating for everyone to get arrested, but I am advocating for loving our neighbor; civil disobedience can be one component of that. Do you see your neighbor in the ditch? Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Kelsey