



Grain

“Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves...’” Genesis 11:4

Field

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Acts 2:1-5

Thoughts

“What about home equity we build through stories and relationships?” That was a question a housing advocate posed on a radio program I heard in northwestern Wisconsin. Driving, I didn’t write down the speaker’s name but got absorbed in her message about how our society has moved so far in the direction of viewing houses and apartments as commodities worth only what they offer in financial equity, that we can undercut other values. In the midst of her talking about gentrification, someone called in to say she had friends who purchased homes to fix up and sell, and that they had honest businesses. The speaker said she was not concerned about mom and pop businesses, but ones that were consistently creating a housing crisis for people. Companies that purchase apartment buildings to remodel and raise the rent are displacing an increasing number of individuals and families who can’t easily find affordable housing. I felt challenged as a citizen, but also personally. Which messages about what is only supposed to be transactional am I buying in to? What types of equity that cannot be monetized are easy to gloss over? Where do I need to slow down and be grateful?

In the story of the Tower of Babel, God was a commodity people reached for. There was no value in the journey, only in securing God as a sort of prize. Did people work together for the goal without really even seeing each other? Who got trampled on?

Acts 2 is one of the places where we see the Holy Spirit bursting into the world as a great gift. No one is defined as a commodity or casualty. No need to grit our teeth reaching for God. Pentecost was a moment of knowing what was of value without anyone giving up their languages or identities or being turned into pawns of any system. God’s story didn’t end with the cross or even the resurrection. There would be another surprise and still is. The Holy Spirit moves beside us with reminders of how to love and where to build equity. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy