



Grain

“You’ve got to be taught before it’s too late; before you are six, or seven, or eight; to hate all of the people your relatives hate. You’ve got to be carefully taught.”

—Oscar Hammerstein II, *You’ve Got to Be Carefully Taught* from *South Pacific*

Submitted by Rev. Peter Heide, Boscobel, WI

Field

“26 Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?” Luke 14:26-28

Thoughts by Reverend Peter Heide

This passage has always created difficulty for me. “Hate my family? Life itself? Isn’t that a bit extreme, Jesus?”

I learned the words from the musical “South Pacific” when I was eight, and I learned how hate can twist our lives shortly thereafter. I learned that hate is easy to learn, but love? Love needs to be taught too—not the love of the world with that heart-thumping, blood-racing, adrenalin-rushing, metabolic, Hollywood thing, but the love that lifts up people from their places of obscurity and recognizes them as God’s image in the world. That love needs to be taught.

It has been many years since I was asked the question, “When you are standing on the North Pole, what direction are you facing?” Yet, I think of it this week, when we are asked, “If you are standing in God’s love completely, then what is your attitude towards the rest of the world?” Love is, after all, an emotional response to the priorities we have set for ourselves.

If we are IN Christ, in the FULLNESS of Christ, in the EMBRACE of God’s grace, we know our previous relationship with the world is emptiness. In the language of baptism, “We have died to sin and been raised up into new life in Christ.” Now, it is through Christ’s love for the world that we experience the world. It is no longer our love of the world that matters. It is Christ’s love for the world that continues to be our guide and direction. It is not what we want, but what Christ wants. It is truly Christ’s leading that takes us into the world of need.

Today we live in a political reality of division and hate-rhetoric. It is here that these words from Jesus challenge us to rethink our relationship with God and one another. It is time to consider the cost of the tower, and the cross. It is time to consider the opposing armies we face and what we can do with God on our side. We are challenged to consider the cross we are carrying. Is it the cross of crucifixion or the empty resurrection cross? Is it our own work that really matters, or is it Christ’s work that makes the difference? If we stand in the fullness of Christ’s love, then what is the emotional regard we have for the world? What direction are we facing? Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Peter