



## Grain

“Attention is the beginning of devotion.” –Mary Oliver

### Field

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 24 He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 25 But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' 27 He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house—...Lk. 16:19-27

### Thoughts

“Rosalie, why do people keep asking you to give talks?” That was the question I asked Rosalie Wahl, whom I got to know via the Quakers many years ago while living in Stillwater, Minnesota. I experienced her as an elder, probably in her late 70's, who had a way of noticing people of all ages around her and paying attention to what was happening to individuals and groups most disadvantaged in society. While at a meeting at her house one day, Rosalie kept getting phone calls. When I asked her about why she was receiving invitations to speak, she looked surprised and told me she had been the first woman on the Minnesota Supreme Court. “You’re kidding. I just thought you were a nice woman.” She laughed and proclaimed, “Well, I like that.” With or without her label, she was someone with dimension.

The Gospel lesson offers a critique on where we place our attention. How are we noticing others but also how fully are we living? Lazarus needed to be noticed, hungry outside the home of what’s his name. What was the name of the rich man anyway? He was a principal character in the story, but his identity was consumed by his wealth. What had he missed out on by ignoring life beyond his narrow goal to accumulate wealth? How had others suffered because of that?

Jesus doesn’t tell us to be perfect or constantly busy spreading our attention thin. But we are warned to have identities beyond our label levels and bank accounts. Pay attention to the people we are called to notice in our personal lives, the youth in the streets crying for a planet to live on, the hungry threatened by policy changes, to the ones God places before us. The warning is also grace leading us to living a life with dimension. And well, I like that. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy