



### Grain

“Make the subtle shift from pushing yourself to be the best *in* the world, to allowing yourself to be the best *for* the world.” –Dewitt Jones

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

### Field

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; Mt 5:13-19

### Thoughts

At seminary, I had a pastoral care professor who seemed to like shaking up first year students. One day, he told a story about a woman who had sacrificed so much in giving to everyone around her that she eventually grew bitter. He ended by saying, “Altruism sucks.” Words several of us regularly started to repeat in jest. However, his statement could actually be comforting if you have recently said no to being on yet another committee as you felt pulled in too many directions, or because you just said yes to taking on another responsibility because it really seemed right.

The Sermon on the Mount portrays a life of belonging to God while reminding us that how we interact in the world matters. We rest and are fed in the scenery of the Beatitudes (last week’s Gospel) so that we don’t want to live only for ourselves. I recognize this scenery when church leaders are excited about people they meet via community meals and food pantry ministries, when making connections between their faith and public life, or when being intentional about welcoming a group that hasn’t always felt at home in the church, as just a few examples.

Ministries can extend beyond their particular focuses. A lay leader told me about how devastated she was when the foster child she wanted to adopt began exhibiting behavior from a mental illness that was beyond her capability to handle. Feeling guilty and isolated after reversing the adoption process, she attended a Reconciling in Christ parish with many LGBTQ members. Even though she was straight, a church that lived out being welcoming offered an opening for grace. It was a salty parish for her.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns about losing our edge as people of faith, forgetting who we are, breaking God’s laws and encouraging others to do the same. He doesn’t say you’ll get tossed out of the kingdom of heaven, but will be the least in the kingdom. I suppose you could say, “Well, that ain’t bad. I’m still in.” But we have this one life on earth. Let’s make it salty and live with beautiful scenery. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy Crane