



Grain

“When you’re not feeling holy, your loneliness says that you’ve sinned.” Leonard Cohen

Field

1 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him...." 35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains. John 9:1-3 & 35-41

Thoughts

At a women’s conference, one of the speakers talked from her wheelchair about how clergy in her former denomination said she was disabled because of her sin. The message didn’t come out of the ELCA. However, there are stories about blaming ourselves and one another for illnesses and physical challenges in all church traditions. The problem has emerged around COVID-19 in some contexts.

A non-denominational pastor and broadcaster, who was granted White House press credentials, stated that God sent the corona virus as a plague to purge sin. There are other absurd claims that leave us shaking our heads, incredulous that anyone would believe them. And yet, when we face a serious illness ourselves we can easily wonder what we did wrong, and produce an internal list of our flaws.

Jesus redefined sin, which was about spiritual separation from God. Those who thought they had a handle on how they could physically spot sin were the furthest from the truth and understanding God’s love. Depending upon and being in relationship with God was what mattered; it was everything in the way Jesus is portrayed in St. John.

I have great admiration for parish leaders exploring how to be in relationship at this time. They are navigating uncharted territory in how to best show God’s love in our worship communities. Within all of our contexts, how do we practice social distancing, but at the same time holy connecting, heart mending, neighbor linking, community uniting? I am heartened by the outpouring of ideas, many of which you can find on your synod websites, this message from **Bishop Elizabeth Eaton**, and resources from **ELCA Advocacy**. On another note, this Ohio **epidemiologist's explanation** is excellent.

God is greater than the changes we need to make. Grace will guide us. Happy Monday!

Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to cindyc@loppw.org

All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at www.loppw.org

Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy Crane