



Grain

“Then Jesus told him (Thomas), ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’” John 20:29

Field

40 "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.
41 Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous;
42 and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." Matthew 10:40-42

Thoughts

Recently, I was part of a discussion about race. A black woman in our small group said that George Floyd's murder was horrible but it didn't feel new. That type of violence has been a part of her whole life. Growing up in a small southern community, she experienced overt segregation between black and white people. She knew of local lynchings, rapes, and other types of physical brutality. In the North and the South, parents have to warn their children about how to engage in a white dominated society. Thankfully our country is paying attention to George Floyd's murder, though she questioned why people had to see the video. "But why didn't they believe our stories before?"

I thought of Thomas hearing about Jesus' resurrection from his trusted friends but needing to know for himself. What's wrong with that? Accepting rumors and not investigating for oneself can lead to harm. Yet Jesus said that you're blessed if you believe without seeing. Maybe he was talking about taking down road blocks to accepting an extraordinary reality, be it joyful or horrific, that rings true in our hearts and is backed by a history.

I have to confess sometimes still being surprised when hearing a friend, colleague, or presenter point to the violence many black people experience related to white supremacy. How much am I really absorbing the stories that repeat over time? I need to check my barriers to understanding when hearing the question, "But why didn't they believe our stories before?"

The Gospel lesson from St. Matthew is about welcoming. Maybe offering a "cold cup of water to one of these little ones" in our current context takes the form of listening. As imperfect little ones, may we all be granted the grace to listen and be heard, and build upon that to engage with the world. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy Crane