

Monday Quotes



Grain

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; 3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil... Psalm 23: 1-4a

Field

1 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." 2 Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" 5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord." 6 They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel. Exodus 32:1-6

Thoughts

The golden calf was not a foreign god, but the image that Aaron and the people created of Yahweh. They wanted something visible in a desert of ambiguity.

What kinds of statues do we build of God? A good question to ask when learning that some Christian groups raised money for the defense of the boy who killed two people and injured another in Kenosha on August 25. The self-appointed protector shot individuals at a rally remembering Jacob Blake. I'm all for supporting the 17-year-old with mental health and spiritual support, but some Christians touting his behavior as heroic? A scary kind of Christian nationalism is flexing its muscles in the United States. What kinds of images of Christ are they erecting?

We all can build our own internal imperfect statues, especially when answers are unclear and our time in the desert and dark valleys seem long. When I was quite a bit younger and struggling with aspects of my identity, I went to a spiritual director to whom I gave a lot (too much) authority. His word was like God's to me. When I talked about trying to figure out my relationship with Jesus in light of thinking I was a lesbian, he started condemning me in shouts. After a period of time, I wondered how someone that in tune with spirituality could be so wrong. My process included questioning what to do - convert to his way of thinking? Throw him away? Eventually I took my statue down and continued to love him and what I had learned from him. But only God is God.

A personal desert or a broader one of a pandemic and political uncertainty is hard. We can turn any cause, or religious or political figure into idol as we seek respite. God remains with us, calling us to a freer life not bound by the sculptures we create for ourselves. And yet, we find many images and names for God in scripture. Psalm 23, also from next week's lessons, provides the picture of God as a shepherd. What are your deserts or darkest valleys? The Lord is your shepherd. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy