



### Grain

“But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of a beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this kind of understanding good that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age.”

—The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

### Field

<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 John: 8-9

### Thoughts

Several years ago, I attended a church that happened to have a large LGBTQ membership, and where we didn't use the confession on Sunday mornings. The latter troubled me. The senior pastor explained that it was because so many of the members had been overwhelmed with messages about their sinfulness just for being who they were. Certainly that was also my experience and that of many other gay people. One man from the congregation told the story of his former Pentecostal church performing an exorcism on him to take away his gayness. And I remember my own shift from viewing homosexuality as a sin to realizing that homophobia was. Many people who are not part of the LGBTQ alphabet also have experienced that shift toward sexual minority people.

Where else have we had shifts in how we view sin? Repeated statements such as, “Black lives matter,” and “Guilty while driving black,” uncover subconscious messages about who is and isn't automatically viewed as pure or innocent. How do the testimonies at George Floyd's trial impact us? What sin is historically involved in the mistreatment, often brutal, of black or Asian Americans? I believe it is the sin of resisting whom God loves and whom Jesus died for.

In the Easter season, we have moved from an angry mob to the promise of another way made tangible in a beloved community. God is with us in our suffering from the brokenness in our relationships. But the resurrection also promises real possibilities of reconciliation. 1 John was likely written in the context of a church divided and challenged by temptations to turn following Christ into an abstract spiritual venture separated from the world. The writer responded by saying, No, friends, we're dealing with real life here. The risen Christ is present in our concrete interactions through forgiveness and reconciliation.

We all need confession because regardless of how we have experienced any sort of bias against us, we fall short of recognizing whom Jesus loves. The good news is that we can be forgiven. That grace of forgiveness is the basis of our participating in beloved community and reaching out to find reconciliation in the world. Christ is risen! Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy