

## Monday Quotes



### Grain

“We do not serve others with an eye toward making them obligated to us. Nor do we distinguish between friends and enemies or anticipate their thankfulness or ingratitude.”

–Martin Luther, *Freedom of a Christian* (1520)

### Field

<sup>5</sup>When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” <sup>6</sup>He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” <sup>11</sup>Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. <sup>14</sup>When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.” <sup>15</sup>When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. John 5:5-10 & 11-15

### Thoughts

How can we afford enough bread? Where do we begin? How do we handle the power in providing? John’s Gospel lesson is layered with messages about feeding people physically and spiritually.

Scripture is filled with passages about concretely responding to people experiencing hunger. The prophets denounced the well-fed who ignored the physical needs of others. And in this reading, Jesus was attentive to the hunger pangs in the crowd. God’s call to love our neighbor via concrete acts permeates the Bible. But Jesus’ message didn’t end with addressing people’s physical needs. The church isn’t a secular social service agency, as wonderful as many agencies are. We also engage with how Jesus dealt with power, our always returning to the freedom in love and the gift of a spiritual motivation.

When Jesus realized that the people wanted to force him to be king, he withdrew. But why not encourage someone who knows how to provide to become a leader in government? We don’t know the details of Jesus’ decision to back away, but that his act of feeding was about love and not a transactional step up a career ladder. The story shouldn’t stifle our feeling moved to celebrate people rising within politics or other fields, but it alerts all of us to return to what is most important – grace. It is by grace that we are recovered from a life defined only by transactions, our own complexes, or popularity within a system. Grace opens us to a broader vision of feeding and loving one another. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy