



Monday Quotes

Grain

“I like crossing the imaginary boundaries people set up between fields – it’s very refreshing.” –Mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani, first female to win the Fields Medal

Field

²⁴From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁸But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” ²⁹Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” ³⁰So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. Mark 7:24-30

Thoughts

Jesus crossed boundaries. That’s difficult to say without mentioning how the topic of crossing boundaries is a trigger for some people. And there are those who continue to use religion itself to manipulate and harmfully traverse people’s needed boundaries. So much can be misused.

In our contemporary society, boundaries bring to mind sexual boundaries, emotional, or professional ones. Many businesses and denominations have boundaries trainings. How are others taking advantage of us or do we cross the boundaries of others consciously or without noticing? But in this story from St. Mark, the borders crossed break down barriers to creating healthy boundaries.

Jesus and the Syrophenician woman traverse systemic barriers between their cultures. Members of the majority culture in Tyre had a history of persecuting Jewish people in their community. It had to take courage or at least awareness of moving beyond his insider’s mode for Jesus to walk across the border. But perhaps the geographical stretch was sufficient for him. Was casting a demon from a Gentile child of Tyre too much? Was his initial resistance to healing the Gentile woman’s daughter about rigidly prioritizing the children of Israel? Was he momentarily caught in the system of bias between the two cultures? Was Jesus just testing her or nudging her to have a voice, or did he actually change his mind?

Whatever the answers to the above questions, the woman also crossed boundaries. Her love for her daughter gave her courage to move out of her role as a woman of her time and beyond the contempt her culture had against someone like Jesus. In so doing, she insisted on healthy boundaries. Don’t cross my boundaries by insisting I don’t have a voice and that we are lesser children of God. She honored Jesus’ boundaries as someone through whom God’s love and healing could flow, instead of dismissing him with contempt, as her culture likely taught her to do.

Where do we need courage to cross boundaries? Where do our healthy boundaries need to be restored? Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy