



Grain

“There is something in us that refuses to be regarded as less than human. We are created for freedom.” –Bishop Desmond Tutu

Field

²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” ²⁴And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon... ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. Luke 4:22-26; 29-30

Thoughts

Back in his hometown, Jesus surprised people with his wisdom and then offended them when he claimed they shouldn't expect any special treatment from God. Jesus drew upon the prophets to challenge the town's privilege about how and through whom God works. Epiphanies can draw us closer to seeing ourselves and others as fully human but are also sometimes met with rejection. Jesus was run out of town.

While watching a PBS program, “Why Race Matters,” hosted by Angela Fitzgerald on January 17, I thought about how embedded our wrong assumptions can be. Fitzgerald interviewed an urban farmer, Robert Pierce, from Madison. Pierce shared that after he returned from Viet Nam he was allergic to most of the food he ate. It was natural for him to begin growing his own vegetables because as a child his mother sent him to help older neighbors with their gardens. He also noticed how many seniors started to look less healthy after a fast-food restaurant sprang up on Madison's south side. With the aid of college business classes he became an organic farmer. The seniors in his neighborhood applauded his efforts, but his peers associated farming with slavery. Why was he doing this? A history of forced farming dissociated many of his friends from the land.

He continued farming, and was at first, the only black farmer at the Dane County Farmers' Market around Capitol Square. Other people at the market were making money, but he wasn't, even with his blue potatoes that were rich in antioxidants. A Chicago journalist wrote a story on the farmers market, including a segment on Pierce's blue potatoes. People went in droves in search of the blue potatoes but would only buy one or two from him. The next summer, a white farmer from a neighboring booth began buying Pierce's blue potatoes to sell, and sold great quantities. That was enough of the farmers' market for Pierce, but he still thrived elsewhere.

When do we reject goodness and health? What a loss when we cling to false assumptions. But how marvelous that we do not have control over the Spirit and the epiphanies God offers unexpectedly. May we be graced to see one another as God does. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Cindy