



Grain

"I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet. I send no compliments to your mother ... I am seriously displeased." (Lady Catherine De Bourgh after Elizabeth has refused to break it off with her nephew, Mr. Darcy.)
—Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Field

10After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you... Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." ¹⁷The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" ¹⁸He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. Luke 10:1-6, 17-18

Thoughts by Joyce Anderson, Eau Claire, WI

I thought of the above *Pride and Prejudice* scene when I read through the lessons for July 3. I was struck by how either explicitly or implicitly, if you are "with God" there is much to rejoice in and if not, there is potential hell to pay, or as Jane Austen might say, serious displeasure. In Luke, Jesus sends out the 70 to preach and heal. If their authority is accepted, they are to announce the kingdom of God is at hand and are to heal the sick. If not, they are to warn the townsfolk that it will be worse for them than for Sodom. Even in Paul's letter to the Galatians, the blessing is conditional.

These readings make me uneasy. My next-door neighbor, a likeable guy felt called to run for office and was elected. And re-elected. He's viewed as a good Christian man. Yet we disagree on practically every political issue. Restore drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants? Nope. Any kind of gun legislation. Nope. A woman's body should be off limits to government regulation. Nope. Increase Medicaid during a pandemic? Nope. We each believe we are being true to the teachings of Christ and that we are with God and God is with us.

How do we act as citizens in a nation in which Christians have contradictory understanding of Christian behavior from my next-door neighbor all the way to the US Supreme Court? And in a nation founded on the idea of separation of church and state?

I turn to Martin Luther who advises us to look at scripture through the lens of Jesus. Luke 9:51, begins with "Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem" where he would be condemned as an outcast and a criminal by respectable religious people and rulers. Along the way, he stood with those considered unclean, those who were marginalized. He restored life. May God be with us, and may our own journeys be blessed with insight as we set our faces toward Jesus. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Joyce