



Grain

¹“Let mutual love continue. ²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:1-2

Field

¹⁴On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. ¹¹For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” ¹²He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Luke 14:1, 11-14

Thoughts

During my Sabbatical, for which I continue to be grateful, one of my projects was to declutter my house to get ready to sell before moving into another home in Madison. I was eager to part with my home and several belongings but also grieved letting go. Most of the furniture I placed on the curb in front for anyone who wanted it disappeared without any interactions with the new owners. But shortly after I put my old bike on the curb, there was a knock at my front door. Standing not on the porch near the door, but all the way down the steps in front of the porch, was a large man, who happened to be black. He asked if he could take my bike. I was surprised because people usually just took things from the curb. He said he wanted to make sure I didn't think he was stealing it. I went outside with him to the curb to answer a few questions he had about my bike. He repeated a couple of times that he wanted to ensure that I was giving it away because he didn't want anyone to think he was stealing it. I loved the way he valued my bike and showed so much appreciation for it. It is a good bike. But what is it like to feel a need to explain your presence?

Later, while I was working outside, a woman with a small physical frame and who happened to be white asked if I had a dresser inside. She was looking for furniture for her daughter who just moved into an apartment. I told her to go into my almost empty house to look at the few remaining items I'd be moving to the curb. The woman didn't seem surprised by my invitation. Perhaps she was used to being treated as someone who blended in. I was delighted by how she praised a few antique chairs and a cabinet I built several years ago but had no place for now. Later, she returned with her daughter who took a couple of more items and thanked me profusely for the cabinet. How unexpected that a couple of strangers shared my experience of valuing, and engaged me to feel grateful for what I have had and could afford to release. Soon after, a young guy stopped on his bike with a box-like trailer. He wanted one of my old heavy bookcases so badly he was going to try to balance it behind his bike without any fasteners until I gave him a rope.

What do angels do? Perhaps they minister by helping us grieve and feel gratitude, or remind us of unjust differences in privilege, or offer comic relief. In the Gospel, Jesus is concerned about inclusivity, but also the spiritual well-being of the Pharisees. Within the transactional systems the religious leaders created, interactions were limited; they seemed to lack room to engage angels. What are we missing? What are we graced to recognize? Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Cindy