



Grain

“Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering.
There is a crack, a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”
Leonard Cohen

Field

³⁶“But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. Matthew 24:36-44

Thoughts

Stay alert! The new church year begins with Jesus issuing a warning or plea to notice. “Keep awake.” When the son of God comes, “be ready.” He refers to the apocalyptic salvation story of Noah and to an image of a thief invading in the night, at a time when we may be resting and less on guard and when our vision is obscured. The latter was especially true before the age of electricity.

When discussing the verse about a thief coming in the night, Walter Brueggemann draws from the Old Testament story about God calling Samuel at night. Samuel thought he heard Eli, who was almost blind and ended up being the one who realized that it was God’s voice Samuel had heard. God’s nudges and grace may intrude our mundane activities or down time and alert us during challenges we and the world face. Will we notice when God interrupts our lives or will someone like Eli help us to become aware, or will we distract ourselves and doze off when offered hope?

During the first Sunday of Advent the colors in the church change, we have a new Gospel, Matthew, to focus on for this year, and we begin lighting Advent candles. But we also have the cultural side of our holidays. This season has a way of accentuating what is joyful but also the parts of our lives and world that are broken. We may look forward to seeing family and friends while cringing at anticipated critiques that family is so well equipped to make. Some families may be divided politically and some because of grudges or cycles of addictions. Some grieve the family and friends they no longer have around to love and disagree with. But it’s through some of those cracks of hurt and imperfection that the light gets in.

In our public and personal lives, we may love through planning and lifting our voices. Also notice where there is grace beyond what we can organize. As each Advent candle is lit during this season, may we contemplate those places through which the light is entering in. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy