

Monday Quotes



Grain

"It is a mark of discernment and maturity to strip life down to one compelling loyalty, to be freed of all the others that turn out to be idolatrous." –Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann

"These are the times that trouble men's (our) souls."

–Thomas Paine, submitted by Rev. Gail Sowell, Edgar WI

Field

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; ³he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long." Psalm 23

Thoughts

"The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want." The repeated words through history haven't lost their significance through overuse, but create familiar common ground for love.

Walter Brueggemann points out that the opening line of Psalm 23 "is clear about the goal and focus, the center and purpose of life: Yahweh and no other. No rival loyalty, no competing claim—not economic or political, not liberal or conservative, not sexist or racist, or any of the other petty loyalties that seduce us." The Good Shepherd cuts through our allegiances that do not feed our souls or benefit society. In Old Testament times, the metaphor for shepherd was used for God and also kings who cared for the people or, like inattentive shepherds, allowed them to scatter.

In many ways, societies have advanced since Psalm 23 was written, but not in our insatiable grabbing for more. Recently, a Republican legislator commented to me that there is an abundance of legislators focusing only on pleasing their party or factions within their party, rather than on what is best for the people. With fellow Republicans and Democrats, that same legislator is supporting three of the bills LOPPW has been advocating on for many years. Will opposition to any of these bills be based on genuine disagreements, wrong information, partisan loyalty, loyalty to a faction within one's party or possibly to donors? Grabbing for more power rather than shepherding can be seductive.

In scripture, shepherding is often used to talk about governance and tensions between loyalties to powers. Martin Luther claimed it was important for preachers to unmask those loyalties in our leaders. However, we don't want to take what Luther said to the extreme and forget our leaders are human and needed courage to run for office; maybe some of you should run for office! But it is important for all of us to discern. We also ask for the grace for loyalties to various powers to be unmasked within ourselves. "The Lord is my shepherd." Such freeing words. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy