



Grain

“...We are living globally and individually, the antithesis of hospitality. And you, stranger--you just keep moving. We'll teach you a thing or two if you try to come to our door.” –Bishop Timothy Marcus Smith, North Carolina Synod

Field

10“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. John 10:1-10

Thoughts

Is the purpose of your doors to welcome people in or keep them out? St. John’s reading flows from Jesus’ returning a blind man from being an outcast to living in fellowship and having more food security. The Gospels are filled with passages about Jesus swinging the door of God’s love and community wide open. But Jesus also warns about those who destroy and steal community from others. There are reasons to lock our doors physically and metaphorically.

I’m glad for Jesus’ warning when trying to navigate my personal life, when hearing about trusting individuals getting involved with the wrong leaders or becoming overly exposed on social media, and when trying to discern just actions versus decisions that only increase money and power for the very few. But if we don’t trust at all and operate primarily out of fear, our world view lacks grace and hospitality. A person could even turn into one of those ready to fire a gun at someone for knocking at their door or pulling up in their driveway, as we have just read in the news.

I worked for an organization that brought an exhibition of the Nazi persecution of gay people from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to Madison. A curator from the museum came to town for the opening. I asked him about a message written in German on one of the exhibition panels. He said it was a letter from a woman reporting her brother for being gay to the Gestapo. “Was she threatened in any way?” I asked. No. She had walked through a door of twisted fear and patriotism and closed the door of community and safety to her brother.

There are situations in which there is no apparent danger, but we are afraid and tempted to become part of the actual danger, and others in which we need to listen to our inner voice about a real threat. Let us not discern and develop our world views that lead us to making decisions alone, but in holy community welcomed through the door God opens for us. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy