



Grain

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.” Psalm 23: 4-5

Field

22Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. ¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:1-14

Thoughts

“So many of my relationships are transactional,” a former colleague shared. She said her faith was one of the places she could return to remember deeper connections. There is nothing wrong with networking to build circles of relationships that lead to making beneficial negotiations or successful business deals. However, when everything is valued according to what we gain materially, what are we missing? What are we doing to ourselves and others? Come/Return to the banquet. You’re invited!

Within the odd context of the challenging parable from the Gospel lesson, we get a glimpse of immense hospitality. The king told his servants to go out into the streets and gather everyone, “both good and bad” to be guests at the wedding banquet. In the same way, God is ready to give away love to us all even when we want to exclude, or we are excluded according to what is transactionally beneficial on a material level.

At the same time, in the parable, an imposter is targeted at the banquet. What happened to including everyone? Is the imposter someone who counters the epitome of the message of God’s love or intensely makes a religion out of what opposes the kind of joy found at the banquet? There are brands of Christianity that mark God’s blessings by what people own, that do not repent of how we’ve damaged the planet, promote racial subjugation, and limit who is worthy to sit at the table according to greed. Making mistakes with power is what we return to Christ from, not a model out of which we shape a religion. Discerning the difference is vital in today’s world. May God grace us with discernment and joy. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy