



Grain

“Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid.” –Frederick Buechner

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

Field

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²“But about that day or hour no one knows...³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake... ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.” Mark 13:24-35 and 37

Thoughts written by Rev. James Lynch, Town of Dunn, WI

Jesus lived in heaven-shaking and earth-rattling times. He makes a point of that in the gospel reading for the first Sunday of Advent. Same with us, with the heavens seeming to tumble at times and the earth seeming to rumble in rhyme. Humanity before Jesus and after Jesus most likely felt the same. That would include us. What does that really mean? Are we living in the beginning, middle or the end of days? Think about this: How many times has the world been about to end – and yet, the world is still here? People are still here. Jesus is still here.

There seems to be nothing about the times in which we find ourselves that invites optimism about our situation – and yet, a little, even exuberant, optimism is what we all could use. We can be that cheery note. Yes. we can.

There is nothing about the dark divisions, the rampant polarization much of the world faces daily that says the light is still going to shine – and yet without that light, we are going to become only more lost. We can be that bright little light. Yes, we can.

Jesus tells us to keep watch. Nowhere does it say sit idly by, to let the world with all its imperfections and flaws roll up to you and right over you. Waiting doesn't mean doing nothing to better your situation or the condition of the world around you. Jesus would want us to push ahead, not push away. Jesus tells us to stay on guard. Nowhere does he say we have to do it with a grim look set on our faces. Staying on guard doesn't mean locking out the world as a way of dealing with the fears that the rumbling and tumbling and shaking can cause but being in the world to help it deal with its uncertainties and with ours. Jesus would want us to help, not hinder, not shrink back.

It's easy to be angry and fearful. It's hard to be cheerful and bright when the world tells us not be. Jesus never told us to take the easy way, just the right way. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Jim