



Grain

“Jesus does not call us to a new religion, but to life.” –Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Field

²¹They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. Mark 1:21-28

Thoughts

Jesus’ first public act in St. Mark was to exorcise someone. As he preached, the man cried out for help or to be left alone or maybe both, as we can sometimes do when we need healing but want our demons and awareness of our needs to remain undisturbed. In reaching out to the afflicted, a person considered to be impure, Jesus crossed the boundary of purity and expanded our understanding of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus crossed boundaries to heal bodies and, in some cases, cast out demons as he did in this lesson. He also reframed what or who was pure and impure and where evil reigned. The greatest sin in the New Testament seems to be linked to domination and exclusion.

It is compelling to learn about how some Old Testament purity laws and first century attitudes toward purity have impacted lingering contemporary biases. As someone who belongs to the LGBTQIA+ alphabet soup, I understand how those laws and attitudes about purity have been misused to condemn queer people. I look forward to going to the theater for the soon-to-be released documentary, “1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted Culture.”

But you don’t have to go to scripture to find the origins of all of our attitudes toward what is clean and unclean. We can find power in writing off other individuals, entire cultures, or simply people who have significantly less than we do as unclean based on modern false narratives.

Jesus introduced a new kind of power of compassion. Christ’s love seeks us out even when we want to be left alone. It challenges us when we fall into habits of remaining silent amidst injustice. May the presence of the holy embody you, bring you healing, and expand our vision. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy