



Grain

“Being free is living in reality.” –Shigeto Oshida

Field

³¹ Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:31-36

Thoughts

Reality. It is a great place to live but sometimes uncomfortable and even too much. You may have examples of your mind and body shifting to compartmentalize the reality of a traumatic experience to protect you from an emotional overload. My niece talks about how several years ago, when she found her son dead, that she felt like two people. One self observed her other self who was going through the motions of what she needed to do next. Some realities cannot be absorbed all at once.

When a truth is not overwhelming but simply challenges our comfort zone, we make decisions about how to respond. I need to adjust. I need to learn more. Maybe I will find other sources that communicate a different version of what I’d like to call truth. And then there is the kind of truth that we welcome like a cold glass of water when our mouths are dry in a desert of half-truths and lies.

Truth is a big issue in our society, compelling the ELCA bishops at the recent Conference of Bishops to write a [statement](#) about it: “Pledge to be vigilant guardians of truth, refusing to perpetuate lies or half-truths that further corrode the fabric of our society...”. People are writing books about the topic. I just read “When the Bough Breaks...” by Danielle Hensley, about an Episcopal woman whose very educated parents and other family members have gone to the fringes to get all their news. I thought it was going to be a guidebook about how to hold difficult discussions, but it was more about her struggles and persistence in seeking and telling the truth. How painful when loved ones move to the fringes.

Call me old fashioned and conservative, but I conserve turning to some of the same news sources that I did growing up and as a young adult - mainline news, including PBS, NPR, local newspapers, etc. None of those sources are perfect. What media can give us a completely full view? But what would drive people to name all those sources as being completely unreliable and move them to the fringes? Hensley talks a lot about racism in her book and how it is a privilege to be able to lose interest in it.

Truth as portrayed in St. John is about being in relationship with Jesus. Let us linger in the beautiful truth of God’s love, which is where our attempts at truth-telling begin and where we return from our own mistakes of the spreading of falsehoods. In many situations, we cannot alter people who choose to dwell on the fringes any more than we can change an addict. But we can be persistent in seeking and telling the truth as part of our response to God’s grace. That is no small thing. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy