



Grain

“And if we do act, in however small a way, we don’t have to wait for some grand Utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.” –Howard Zinn

Field

15When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. 16When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. 19When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. 20But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” 21Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Thoughts

Jesus’ needing alone-time has always stood out to me in the Gospels. Within most of those spaces of retreat we receive no details and may wonder about how he prayed. Did he meditate in silence, aware of the breath of God? Maybe he prayed out loud and sang. Jesus’ venturing off to a mountain or to a lonely place reminds many of us of our need to slow down. Sometimes even when we stop, our minds may still be racing.

What we know about Jesus’ retreating in this particular lesson is that he withdrew right after the people he fed (verses 6-14) wanted to turn him into a king. It wasn’t that Jesus shied away from significant titles; he embraced the identity of Son of God and also referred to himself as the bread of life, etc. But he obviously didn’t feel called to be a civil servant or a king. Allowing the people to raise him up as a king in the way they wanted to would have been a crowd-pleasing response, but not one as an authentic leader. We don’t want any of our governmental leaders who are suited for their positions to be mere crowd-pleasers or populists. This wasn’t the first time Jesus was tempted by power. The wrong kind of power can take any of us off course.

In the above part of the Gospel reading from John and the earlier verses on feeding the 5,000, we see an interconnectedness between Jesus engaging with the people and his contemplation. God’s love extended to feeding those who were hungry, moving Jesus to resist power that wasn’t for him and to sink into prayer, and then to stilling the fears of his disciples in a storm.

Many of us feel overwhelmed from just reading the news and social media posts. Right now, awareness is essential. May God grace us to know how to step back and reflect, regain our vision, and discern how to engage. Jesus is with us. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy