

Reflections for Tuesday, May 26

*“And he said to them, ‘Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown; when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. But they have no root, and endure only for a little while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are those sown among the thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. And these are the ones sown on the good soil; they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.’”*

Mark 4:13-20

I am amazed at the creativity and ingenuity we use in dealing with the restrictions that have been imposed on us because of the Coronavirus. We use Zoom to hold meetings and family gatherings. Children go to school and ballet class on line. There are concerts, and operas, and storytelling by famous actors on U Tube. We can attend worship via Facebook. We are social creatures who will always find ways to relate with one another, even in this strange new reality.

How do the ancient words that form the center of our faith speak to our current situation? How is the Word received and used at this time? The answers are for each of us to discern according to the events in our own lives.

The beauty of scripture is that even though it was written thousands of years ago it is still relevant now. Its words are not frozen in time but speak to all times. That why it has endured. That is why we receive it with new ears every time we are encountered by it. It speaks not so much the past to which we cannot return as it speaks to our existence in the now and toward our lives in the future.

Jesus invites us who follow him to be grounded in the words of our faith and to let the roots of that Word grow deep in a ways that define us. But, at the same time we are not so much bound by the Word or a slave to the Word as freed into the Word. We are invited to let the word of God free us in ways that that allow us to act with purpose and love. It is our task to approach the word with seriousness and caution, to consider the times and contexts in which the words of the Bible were written while at the same time acknowledging its enduring truths. We are to let the Word speak to us rather than controlling it for our own purposes. Playing too loosely with the words of our faith can get us into trouble. Using the Word to prop up our own biases will eventually leave us empty. The Word asks us not so much that we use it as it asks that it may use us.

May the Spirit speak through Word given and received during this time in ways that free, astound, challenge, and enlighten. May the words of our faith live in dialogue with the happenings of the world in ways that transform the situations we are given and ever bear fruit.

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