



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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MONDAY 8.22.22

Odd Duck

Scripture: Proverbs 25:6-7

We are 'peculiar'. We have chosen not to go with the majority. We pray and reflect on the life of Christ: most people don't do this. We worship and receive God's gifts in the sacraments: most people don't do this. We shall be in a minority: we shall be odd. There is no danger in that, as long as we don't start to like being odd too much. This love of oddness is what drives us to create division in which each is sure of his own chosenness and pours scorn on others. – *from Kate Tristram in Celtic Daily Readings by the Northumberland Community*

- Have you ever thought of being a committed Christian as something odd?
- How does our love of being unique a problem?

Prayer: Help me to see my life honestly and let it speak goodness to the world. Amen.

TUESDAY 8.23.22

Sugar and Spice

Scripture: Matthew 9:11-13

A hospital exists for the benefit of its patients. It is nonsense to complain having patients admitted interrupts the smooth running of the hospital. The Church exists for the benefit of its non-members, to be salt for the earth, not for the sake of creating more salt. Often times, Church is designed to be user-friendly only to the already initiated. Jesus said, "I didn't come just to call those who are already here, but those who know they are in need."

- Which parts of "Church" might be off-putting to the casual, unchurched observer?
- Is your life in church more about creating salt or welcoming new flavors?

Prayer: Give me your eyes to see myself and others. Help me not to celebrate myself over others. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 8.24.22

Stone Walls

Scripture: Psalm 18

There is an invisible line crossed when someone gives their heart to the Lord and passes from darkness to light, from being close to the Kingdom to being a subject of the King of Kings. At the time someone crosses this line it may be so invisible they do not notice at all, until afterwards they look back and see the distance they have travelled. Gratitude is appropriate; awareness of how momentous this transition has been may also be appropriate. What is not appropriate is the building of a monument to the moment of remembered or unremembered transition if this becomes a wall which keeps others out.

- Where do you experience dividing walls in your life?
- Does our need to define and characterize everything prevent us from seeing God at work?

Prayer: Help me to celebrate even the deaths in my own life. Show me the way to new life. Amen.

THURSDAY 8.25.22

Majority Rules

Scripture: Proverbs 17:17; 18:24

There has probably never been a time in history when the majority of people were serious seeking God. Our Bible sets before us the idea God may use a minority to serve the majority. Church history says the same. It is because of the faithfulness of the few, now the many, that Christian faith has come down the ages to us and we have the change to know God in this way. It has always been so. If God has called us and we want to respond to Him, then we must be faithful to our own vision, whatever the many think.

- How can we learn to see ourselves as God sees us?
- What if our lives, and the ordinary things we did every day, reflected more of what Jesus finds valuable and less of what the world tell us is important?

Prayer: Help me to be authentic and see others for who they are. Let my life speak. Amen.

FRIDAY 8.26.22

Doing and Being

Scripture: Mark 7:24-28

What we are called to do is *be*. Our whole being should be saturated with the presence of God. People who choose to be around us become familiar with this. They will not have unrealistic expectations of us, since we do not pretend to be anything we are not. We are simply ourselves, distinct individuals who have an awareness of the reality of God. This doesn't need to be self-conscious or distancing in any way. We only need to be sensitive to how we relate to the other person.

- Do you avoid bring God to all of the areas of your life because your are worried about it being awkward?

Prayer: Help me, Lord, to turn aside in the midst of my everyday chaos and turn instead toward you. Amen.

SATURDAY 8.27.22

Nuclear Families

Scripture: Ruth 3

Boaz promises that he will do all that Ruth asks. Her faithfulness to her mother-in-law is matched by Boaz's own faithfulness. And, it is worth noting, this foreign widow mirrors God's own faithful love, God's hesed. Boaz says, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter; this last instance of your loyalty (hesed) is better than the first; you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich" (Ruth 3:10). Ruth has chosen (apparently older) Boaz and they find new life in each other.

Love and faithfulness abound, as much as the piles of grain at the threshing floor, and blessings overflow into the lives of those who once were empty." – from Kathryn Schifferdecker's commentary on workingpreacher.org

- People are the conduits through which God blesses us. Who has been a blessing to you lately?
- I wonder what the most authentically faith-filled response is when we are sick or in trouble?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, help us to pray when we're in trouble, when we're happy, when we're sick, and when we've sinned. Give us courage to say "I'm sorry" when we've done something wrong. Thank you for listening and for making things happen through prayers. Amen.