

I confess this morning that...I'm tired. I mean, you know all know me, so you know, generally, I'm always sleepy. No matter what time the alarm goes off, if someone asks how I am in the morning, I'm going to say, I'm tired. But that's not what I mean. I am achingly, bone-deep, down to a cellular level tired. I am tired of constantly feeling as though we are living through moments of generational change. I am tired of fearfully checking the news every morning, not really wanting to, but knowing that I have to in order to make sure I'm keeping up with things. I am tired of the constant latent fear that lives in my chest about whether or not my sister is safe in this world, in this country, when I know there are people who hate her simply because she dared to fall in love. I am tired of having to make decisions about my own health as a woman sometimes faster than I would like to because I don't know what the next day, the next week is going to bring about what is going to be considered acceptable. I am tired of wondering what is and isn't ok to post on Facebook for fear of the repercussions and the conversations that unavoidably happen in the comments. I am tired of having to choose between chaos and vitriol verses silence and complacency. I am tired. I am tired of feeling like it is screaming into the void to say that our trans siblings are beautifully and wonderfully made because there will always be someone who says otherwise even though it literally has zero

impact on their own life. I am tired. I am tired of having to defend ELCA Social Services against lies and misinformation that are going to prevent real people from receiving real, tangible, life-saving help. I am tired of the eggshell walking uncertainty that is life in America these days. And I wonder if I'm tired then maybe you are too. And I wonder if you like me want nothing more than to turn to the gospel and find hope and then you listen to Jesus this week and just sigh and say ok...now I'm tired *and* uncomfortable and where is warm and fuzzy Jesus when we need him.

Let's be real when given the choice between Matthew's Beatitudes and Luke's Blessings and Woes, the Sermon on the Mount versus the Sermon on the Plain, Matthew is going to win every single time because Matthew, for all of the beauty of his words...lets us off the hook. Matthew provides grey space and wiggle room to find ourselves in the message so that we can rest comfortably and say, ah yes, blessed am I. Luke is uninterested in our need for comfort. Luke is solely and completely interested in the comfort of those for whom the world perpetually turns its back and more often than night fights to make them *more* uncomfortable. Where Matthew says, blessed are the poor *in spirit*, Luke just says, blessed are the poor. This is literal. Blessed are those who have no money, who stand on street corners begging for a scrap of something hoping no one will

think they want money to buy drugs, who fill the PORT shelters, who have to make decisions between medical care, rent, or food, knowing that it's truly a no win decision. If we are honest...this is not us...

Where Matthew says blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness sake, Luke just says, blessed are the hungry. The literal hungry. Blessed are those who don't have the luxury of complaining about the price of eggs because they are simply trying to survive, who watch billionaires complain about taxes and minimum wage going up and wonder if anyone truly cares about actual people who need to actually need to work to live, who decide that tonight their kids will eat but they won't because that is simply the choice they have to make. If we are honest...this is not us...

Now, Matthew's mourning and Luke's weeping, there we may find ourselves. Grief is real for all of us, in the many forms it takes. Loss of relationships, loss of stability, loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of certainty, loss of time, the list could go on and on. However, the problem is, once we find ourselves in this gospel, we have a tendency to either discount the rest of it and just focus here, or discount the rest of the world who also see themselves here. Blessed are those who weep because they live in perpetual fear for their life and safety, who weep because the threat of

deportation hangs heavy and real even if they have all the proper documentation, who weep because no one cares about them and their lives, who weep because the world seems to function in a way that treats them as less than human, who weep because they don't know if they can trust their neighbor who may see them as a threat simply because of the color of their skin. Let's be honest...we do weep...but so do our siblings...and we would rather forget that, forget the ways we contribute to those tears.

And then Jesus just lays the gauntlet down, its not enough to bless those that don't include us, but then there are woes to be had for the rich, the full, those for whom the world looks at us and speaks well (which is also us, mostly because we're more interested in maintaining the status quo and not ruffling any feathers rather than risking someone speaking ill of us or being mad at us because we speak up).

None of this is pleasant y'all. And it is a stark reminder that while there is a world of hope we can come to Jesus for, there is also a world of accountability that he holds up to us with the reminder that our faith is not just about what is in it for us but about how we can use that faith in the world for the betterment of others. If we're in this just to be blessed, just for God to take care of us, well...woe to us...

Believe me when I say, that I want nothing more than to spin this to make it more comfortable, to make it not chaff against our skin like so many pieces of sand in our shoes after a day at the beach. I wish that I could give caveats and explanations and say, well, Jesus didn't really mean it *that way*, but to do that would be to cheapen the gospel and to make a mockery of the fact that Jesus came to call us for more than just blind belief.

We had a conversation on Thursday night at adult confirmation about helping God's kingdom to come, and we talked about the enormity of the task, the impossibility of it when looked at in the macro, and it forced us to take a step back and realize that yeah, if we think we have to do all of this at once, or do *all* of it period, it's going to feel like too heavy of a task to take on, and it becomes a great excuse to do nothing. But when looked at as a tiny sphere of influence, how you can make the kingdom come within the ten foot radius of your life, then it becomes manageable, possible, and not something we can ignore so simply.

It is impossible to look at the world around us and not find siblings who need us, the literal poor, the literal hungry, and when we're honest, we know that we would much rather ignore them, because it's overwhelming, it's too much of an ask to get involved, and frankly we have better things to do. This gospel, Jesus himself strikes right to the heart of that feeling and

dares to ask then what does your faith mean to you? Are you just in it for blessings or are you in it to *be* a blessing for others? Are you in it because it's easy and you know all the right words to say or are you in it because you know how serious it is and how much the world needs our efforts? We can only answer these questions for ourselves, within the sanctity of our own hearts, and it's something we all have to wrestle with.

It is ok to be tired, y'all. It is ok to be wearied by the weight of the world, to be frustrated that the work is hard. But it is not ok to be tired of hearing about the call to justice that our faith places on our hearts. It is not ok to be tired of hearing about all those other people. It is ok to take a break, to pause, to give yourself a breather. It is not ok to just say, I'm out because the work is too much and frankly I just don't care that much. Jesus is never going to stop asking us to show up. Jesus is never going to stop saying the uncomfortable things. The blessings will come, we all know that, we've experienced it hundreds of times, but when we tell Jesus that we only want the blessings and we don't want to hear anything about care of neighbor or effort or walking the walk of our faith...well...woe...**AMEN!!!**