

Coffee to Go | Proper 12

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SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the seasons, scriptures and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter. I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So today is, or this week is, proper 12. It starts on Sunday, and proper 12 means it's the 12th Sunday in the season of Ordinary Time. Ordinary simply means the way the Sundays are ordered or numbered. So here in proper, 12, we are with Jesus and Jesus is wrapping up some thoughts, kind of at the close of some lectures he's been offering, kind of those last minute pieces he wants to throw in before he concludes his remarks, as many of us have done. So now he's looking around at his closest followers. And he gives them kind of this rapid fire pop quiz kind of feel. And when I first read through it, I thought Ouch. This feels a lot like the pop quizzes Tony and Charmaine used to surprise us with when I was in seminary. So if you're listening, a shout out to Tony and Charmaine for that because apparently it's in the tradition of Jesus to do this very same thing. So I'm sure we can all kind of feel some empathy for the disciples who are most likely thinking, Whoa, I did not think there would be a test. So let's see what Jesus taught us that the disciples at the close of this teaching session.

Blake Smith 01:59

Well, real quickly, I would just add Tony and Charmaine, if you're listening, you know that I love you dearly. I am so glad I did not have to endure a Tony and Charmaine pop quiz, I'm not sure I would have survived. So hold on to your hat, our chat, our verse, today, verses come from the Gospel according to Matthew, the 13th chapter, the 31, the 31st verse... the 31st verse through the 33rd verse and the 44th through the 52nd verse, and it is a laundry list of the things that the kingdom of heaven is like if you can't find something in this list that you associate with it, or at least give you some good fodder for thought. So... He put before them another parable. The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds. But when it is grown, it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and make nest in its branches. He told him another parable, the kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and re buried than in his joy. He goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. On finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind. When it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets, but throughout the bad. So it will be at the end of the age, the angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous, and throw them into the furnace of fire,

where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all of this? They answered, Yes. And he said to them, therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven, is like the master of a household who brings out his treasure. What is new, and what is old. And I can see Jesus getting to the end of this, like you're saying, and, and given a pop quiz, I mean, he's just gone over this. Okay, here's God's realm, info, INFO, info, INFO, info, you got it? And, of course, we would probably be just like the disciples and say, Oh, of course we got it.

Karin Peter 04:40

I mean, nobody was I would say that. I'm not gonna say no, I didn't understand that. No, I totally empathize with them in this

Blake Smith 04:48

And it's perfectly fine to say that and you might get away with it. If you don't have Jesus or Tony and Charmaine giving you a pop quiz.

Karin Peter 04:59

I think what's really interesting about this Blake is that as an our listeners will hear this as we go along, there were so many times that disciples didn't get it. I mean, it's just, it goes on and on. And it makes me feel better. I think about my own discipleship and about what it really means to be part of the Kingdom of God and to be loved and accepted just just as we are that oftentimes we don't get it. So.

Blake Smith 05:23

Right. So it offers us grace, that we might when we don't get it, and it offers us hope, that maybe someday we will. So you know, each of these analogies that Jesus uses for the kingdom of heaven could make up a separate Coffee to Go podcast without a doubt. But rather than to go that route, I want to look instead at what these have to say about who is included in God's peaceable reign, who are the can in the kingdom. So I'm very interested to see who gets a mention, we have human and creation. We've got plant and animal. We've got wealthy male, and working or domestic female. We've got prosperous merchant and a poor labor. I mean, these images used, that Jesus uses to describe what the realm of God is like, or who the realm of God encompasses are diverse. I mean, they really encompass everything. And, quite honestly, I think for some, and sometimes for me, they're unexpected, because we, you know, we've been told, coming up that you got to be this way, or this way to be acceptable to God. And,

Karin Peter 06:44

You know, when you were going through this, I think that is what kind of hit me is that we don't we don't normally see this kind of descriptor in the gospels, especially when we talk about a woman participating, this woman who's baking bread. It just seems like whenever women appear on the Gospels, it's either as a harlot or or a martyr, if you will. And it just is interesting to see the description of just a woman baking used as as a part of an analogy. So I really appreciated you caught... you naming that.

Blake Smith 07:17

Yeah, you know, in God's realm. God's way is where we are being ourselves. Where we're growing, we're feasting, we're struggling, we're working, we're baking. We're doing all of those things. We're finding our treasure, whatever it is. That's what God's realm is all about. It includes places of shade and safety. It includes moldy bits of yeast, that when use wisely, can miraculously make dough rise beyond what we would imagine. God's way includes things that are breathtakingly beautiful. And things that are sweaty and labor intensive, and smelly, like bad fish.

Karin Peter 08:05

like sorting rotten fish. Yeah.

Blake Smith 08:08

Right. So the way of God, if you will, is not so much other worldly matter of fact, I would argue that it is predominantly this worldly, it is here with us. It's in the mud, it's in the flour, it's in all of those things. It is us and we are it. In all of this we can find shadows of ourselves because we are part of the divine way the living, breathing way of healing, wholeness and peace.

Karin Peter 08:41

Yeah, we could certainly find ourselves in this this really broad encompassing description of what the reign of God is like. So do we ask them questions Blake to think about this week?

Blake Smith 08:54

Yeah, absolutely. You know, knowing that God is in everything and God's way is in everything and it's in us and we are it erases the question for me. When have I, or when have you, been engaged in an everyday activity and suddenly sense the mystery of Divine Presence, the majesty of the created earth or the yearnings of your spiritual self? Again, be it in the mud, in the rain in the sun, wherever and what condition, when have you been engaged in just been kind of caught off guard, suddenly sensing the mystery of the Divine? Another question that I have revolves around the word kingdom, which I know is a problematic word or can be a problematic word because it reflects historical violence and oppression and patriarchy and unfair distribution of wealth and, and on and on and on. But because of that, the question would be what word or phrase Do you feel best represents how you understand God's realm? God's way or God's domain, if not kingdom, what is the word that expresses that for you?

Karin Peter 10:10

So as we begin to wrap up this episode, let's take a look at how we can experience this scripture this week. So my suggestion is that we pick an item from one of the short parables, one of the analogies like pick a mustard jar, empty and washed out, please pick a yeast packet or a loaf of bread or pick a bird or a plural earring, or even a fishing pole or fishing nets, something that you can associate with one of these parables that Jesus shares about the realm of God. And maybe if you're in a family, you could select an item together, or each family member could choose their own, but place it where you'll see it everyday this week. And when you see it, remind yourself, I too am part of God's peaceable realm. Or I am on the divine way, or I am part of God's peaceable community. Keep that image in your thoughts for a bit. And think about how are you like the pearls, the yeast, the see the treasure, or the net, whatever it is that you have chosen, to remind yourself that all are included in the broad encompassing love of God.

Blake Smith 11:32

I see that our blessing today comes from the International Women's Day Karin. So would you like to offer our blessing today?

Karin Peter 11:38

Absolutely. I would be happy to. We we've been in Ordinary Time for several weeks. And ordinary time is a journey in discipleship. In fact, that's really my metaphor for God's realm is the way it senses movement and transformation. So this is a journey blessing. Celebrating living journeying, we are people on the way fighting, caring, challenging. We are people on the way hurting, believing exploring. We are people on the way sharing, understanding, nurturing, we are people on the way.

Blake Smith 12:28

Indeed. Thanks for that Karin, and thank you listeners for joining us here on Goffee to Go. We hope you'll join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holidays of the Christian tradition.