



Wednesday Prayer

13th Sunday after Pentecost – The Good Way vs. the Wicked Way

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. Psalm 1:1-3

We could read this Psalm as – Happy are those who follow “the good way” and have visions of walking a path where everything is beautiful, with fruit trees blooming and the sun shining. And while it is good and right to have these times of beauty in our lives, Yolanda Norton, Chair of Black Church Studies, San Francisco Theological Seminary, challenges us to recognize the “good way” as one *not* devoid of problems, anxieties, or heartache. She emphasizes that the spiritual practice of meditation referred to in the text presumes that the reader has someone else tending to their basic needs for survival. Most of us don’t have the luxury of meditating day and night. She shares, “Meditation then becomes active participation in the world in ways that demonstrate God’s presence in the world.”¹

As you read these prayers each week, and as you consider how you actively participate in your community to protect children from harm, you are practicing meditation. As you work against the wickedness in our society, you are practicing meditation. A survivor of sexual assault by her pastor expressed, “All that evil needs is for good to do nothing.” Meditation is not a practice of doing nothing. It uses mindfulness to train attention and awareness, to get to a place of calm and mental clarity. It can be used to push us into action, to be God’s presence in the world. This survivor needed her church to mindfully work toward awareness and eventually healing. The way of the wicked in this case was to do nothing, to sweep things under the rug. Following the path of the good way recognizes the evil and the pain, actively participating in the human experiences and taking the hard path to do something.

God of Goodness, may our meditation lead us along a path of active participation in our communities. We know you are present with us each step of the way. Guide us along the path of goodness, that we are open to all the ways you are calling us to serve, opening our hearts and minds to support young people and all in need. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

¹Retrieved 9/3/19 from https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4179