

Karen Hollis July 19, 2020, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be reflections of your word to us today, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen

I have this globe that once belonged to my grandparents; it used to sit in a wooden stand that allowed it to spin. I long ago discarded the stand and started keeping it in a high up place near my desk. It has a cord on it that turns on the light inside; over the years I have turned on the light as a prayer offering to the earth. Yesterday I was putting some books away here on the shelf just before sitting down to write my sermon when I heard this rattling above me and before I knew it, the globe had fallen right into my hands. It simultaneously struck the corner of this shelf that sticks out more than the others and broke here right near Central America.

I stood here stunned for a good 5 minutes wondering things like, what does it mean that my symbol for earth directed prayer just broke in my hands? Does it mean the earth is in trouble? We already knew that. Does it mean it is in my/our hands? We already knew that. Is the location of the break significant? We know that any place of brokenness is in relationship with the whole.

What do you do when the world falls broken into your hands? Do you take matters into your own hands to root out all the bad stuff and make everything well, no matter the consequences? Do you sacrifice the wheat whose roots are bound up with those of the weeds? Do you take the risk of sacrificing the vulnerable for the sake of what our limited human perspective tells us will bring wholeness?

Jesus anticipates the human impulse to judge others and say this person doesn't belong and that person doesn't belong . . . and indicates this is just not what the kin-dom of God is about. The kin-dom is not about rooting out those who we think don't belong. Rather, what happens when we all grow together . . . all of us in our fullness, challenging each other, ministering to each other, misunderstanding or acting out of selfish motivations and then coming together in reconciliation, in an encounter of deeper learning about

ourselves and the other? The kin-dom of God is this space that opens when all of our walls come down and we share a moment of connection, when we move past what we thought was important and now seems trivial . . . to a place where God dwells and reveals our common humanity.

We are all part of a world that is broken and whole. When there is brokenness, all suffer, because we are not separate. We are planted together. You may have noticed that I have been talking about brokenness and not evil; it's because I don't think evil is a pure state, rather I think it's a manifestation of a deeper brokenness. It's like psychologists say anger is a secondary emotion – the primary emotion is fear. The Greek word for evil also makes room for this interpretation. So, I'm talking about brokenness in the kin-dom of God; the kin-dom of God that is . . . and has not yet come into its fullness.

Yesterday the broken, yet whole world, fell into my hands and I have no idea what it means. I don't like the broken part – when I look at it, I feel stunned and sad. All of the pieces fell inside, so if I chose to, I could tape it or glue it, but that wouldn't remove the break, and it would take a miracle from Jesus to restore it. If I remove the broken pieces, it won't make it become more whole . . . the globe just needs healing; the world just needs healing. Jesus says, healing and wholeness is our work; this is kin-dom work.