

We are uncomfortable when Jesus holds up the mirror, through parables, and offers a view of our foolishness. This gets in the way of our image of a “never said a critical word” Jesus. But I suggest to you that such a Jesus is a figment of our self-righteousness. Although the flesh and blood Jesus was all about kindness, his zeal for justice resulted in condemnation of powerful persons and structures—Rome and its accomplices, the Jewish authorities, the restrictive purity laws, the inequalities of traditional life. He was and is much more than a sentimental uncle who gives us treats and takes us fishing and tells us we are his own. The Jesus of the gospels loves us enough to challenge us, to call us foolish, and to expect more of us than lip service.

Reflect with me for a moment on the storage barns of our time. Years ago, many of us were concerned/upset/angry over the perceived focus of our own conference foundation to be about money. The irritating phrase regarding property was “highest and best use in keeping with fiduciary responsibility.” It seemed to us that mission and heritage mattered less than income.

We always have that tension: enough funding for mission without compromising our heritage. The money focus takes us down a troublesome path if not monitored carefully for greed. Clearly, there is no greed in this state. But if it showed up, what would it look like? And how might it affect this congregation and its property?

One thing I’m learning about is the depth of history here, with the graveyard as its piko. Just yesterday, several of us toured the site as Tama explained connections with the past—connections only recently made known. Special guests from the University of Hawai’i shared their mana’o as well. This heritage has a different kind of importance, one that goes beyond finances, and it requires na’au pono to protect and perpetuate. The “barns” filled with history only enhance cultural awareness and represent the faithfulness of na kupuna across time. These “barns” are repositories for sharing, not hoarding. And, in the Jesus stories, we are reminded that in our sharing is our salvation.

Last Sunday I used the word “heresies” in speaking about the “prosperity gospel” and any other misuse of the gospel message of simplicity, generosity, peace, equality, and justice. These heresies are confronted by the prophetic voices of our

age—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Allan Boesak, William Sloane Coffin, Jeremiah Wright, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jim Wallis, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., William Barber, and Desmond Tutu. If you are unfamiliar with any of these names, I suggest you do some research. You'll be inspired by their understanding of Jesus as justice, of the foolishness of complacency, of the importance of the "least of these," of God's preferential option for the poor in the gospel proclamation.

When the mirror is held up in front of us, do we see ourselves telling the stories of Jesus, stories of uplift for those who have no barns and no grain, stories of condemnation for those whose barns are too small for their growing wealth and for whom the concept of sharing is unknown? Are you telling stories of empowerment for all those who labor and are carrying heavy burdens? Are you telling stories of love that compels the telling of truth and taking risks? Are you telling stories of invitation to table fellowship where we see Jesus in the breaking of bread?

Tell that story especially as you prepare your hearts for communion next Sunday.