

St Matthew

21/9/26

The American poet, ardent lover of the wild, and farmer, Wendell Berry, has left us with some wonderful writing including this poem sent to me yesterday:

*I go among trees and sit still.
All my striving becomes quiet
around me like circles on water.
My tasks lie in their places
where I left them, asleep like cattle.*

*Then what is afraid of me comes
and lives a while in my sight.
What it fears in me leaves me,
and the fear of me leaves it.
It sings, and I hear its song.*

*Then what I am afraid of comes.
I live for a while in its sight.
What I fear in it leaves it,
and the fear of it leaves me.
It sings, and I hear its song.*

*After days of labour,
mute is my consternation.
I hear my song at last,
and I sing it. As we sing,
the day turns, the trees move.*

I would like to suggest that something like this happens when Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners. A peace is made between the participants which goes deeper than all their differences. We learn to sing a new song unafraid of one another. We become ourselves. We find a unity our mutual fears had hidden from us - part there all along, part created - an ongoing part in God's forever work of creation. Matthew follows the sound of this invitation and finds his vocation as a follower of the Way open to us all. It's a primal sound calling for a primal response - a meal, perhaps, where we sacrifice our fears for the sake of one another.

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