I heard a story that the word sincere comes from the Latin words ‘sine’ and ‘cere’ which means ‘without wax’. Basically there was a period of time when people would sell marble statues and sculptures with wax on it to hide the flaws of the marble and sell it at a higher price. Eventually the words ‘sine/cere’ were put on marble statues to note that it did not contain any wax. They were saying: what you see is what you get.
The irony of that story is that **it isn’t true.** Apparently the word ‘sincere’ comes from “the Latin sincerus meaning clean, pure, sound (1525–35). Sincerus may have once meant ‘one growth’ (not mixed), from sin- (one) and crescere (to grow).” (Wikipedia) I like that image, though, too of ‘one growth’ because so much of our world is mixed, even our food. We modify and we adjust and we alter to the point that it maybe doesn’t even look like what it was originally meant to be. And I’m not saying that’s all bad, but when McDonald’s makes broccoli taste like bubble gum…but that just doesn’t seem right.
Anyway, sincerity to me is probably one of the most important aspects of my relationships. I’d much rather have someone be honest about who they are and what they’re doing, accept it and be up front about it than to have people tell me everything is fine and lie to my face. And I think all of us want sincerity, right? I mean as much as it’s awkward or difficult or even painful for someone to unload something on us that they’re dealing with, we’d much rather have that then to have a fake relationship, right? Okay, sometimes we maybe don’t want that, but in our closest relationship I think we need that sincerity.
And there’s a balance here, right? I mean we can’t go around unloading everything we’re dealing with on everyone at all times otherwise we’ll probably not find anyone around anymore. But I believe we do need to be more honest with ourselves and with others about who we are and where we’re at. We need to put aside the masks that we’re wearing at least most of the time in order to have healthier relationships.
And I think that’s especially true for a community. Jesus often used the word ‘hypocrites’ when describing people who were fake, especially religiously. The word hypocrites comes from the theater and means ‘to act’ or ‘to wear a mask’. Jesus warns strongly against it in many ways because he knew that it got in the way of authentic and whole community.
So, I pray we find ways to be sincere, to stop acting and to be honest with ourselves and others about where we’re at in life and be who God made us to be. God bless.