

Meditation

I would like to tell you one more story and this one is from ancient China:

There once was a Chinese farmer whose horses broke out of their corral and ran away...

The towns people came to him with great concern: Oh...we are so sorry... this is sooo terrible!

The farmer replies to them: mmm....good luck, bad luck, who knows?

Well, the farmer's horses got together with a herd of wild horses and then they all came back home to the Farmer....

Now, the townspeople, seeing that his herd had doubled...are celebrating:

Wow! we are sooo happy for you!!

But the farmer still replies: mmm....good luck, bad luck, who knows?

The farmer's son decides to break one of the wild horses, gets thrown off and breaks his leg...

The towns people once again say: Oh...we are so sorry...this is sooo terrible!

But then the Chinese army come into the village and take all the able bodied young men except the farmer's son.....

In today's reading the disciples were shocked at Jesus' response to the rich young man.

Back then, it was assumed that if you were doing well in life, it was because of God's favor and blessing.

Kind of like today's "Prosperity Gospel"!

So in their understanding, this rich young man who had obeyed all the commandments from his youth, should have been a shoe in for eternal life...

But when Jesus said he had not done enough....that he should sell everything he had before he gained eternal life...it was shocking!

“What! sell the rewards that God had given him for such faithful obedience????

If this good rich, blessed, young man couldn’t be well then, who can be saved?”

**Jesus makes it very clear, once again,
that entering the kingdom of heaven is not about obedience to the rules and commandments.**

**The Kingdom of God is God’s very presence...it is not a reward for being good.
It is the wholeness and fullness of Life for all of creation.**

**Riches, prosperity, stuff are not rewards to a faithful life towards God.
Blessings are not what we get when we are good...
nor are curses and ills and poverty the sign of God’s disfavor...**

**God’s sends the rain on the just and the unjust...
God lets the sun shine on the good and the evil...**

**Sometimes dishonest people get rich.
Sometimes honest people are really wealthy...**

**Sometimes holy people die way too soon....
Sometimes holy people live a long life...**

**The reward or the reason for following the teachings, the way of Jesus
is not for stuff, or for the ‘good life’ whatever that might mean for us.....
because when we die, which we all will, we will leave it all behind.
In a nano second, in a flood like South Carolina is experiencing
or in a tornado like we know here in the midwest,**

all of our stuff can be gone in a flash no matter how good or how awful we have been and to make matters worse, perhaps, all of our 'stuff' just build bigger and thicker walls and we get trapped inside smaller and smaller worlds of fear and worry.

We worry about keeping and protecting everything we have accumulated.

We worry about never having enough, being safe enough, and being worth enough.

Yet....

The real reasons, rewards if you must, for following the Way of Jesus can never be destroyed by anything not a flood or a tornado nor a thief nor an army.

The real reason for following the Way of Jesus is that it connects us to our Original Blessing which is deeper and more real and true than our Original Sin...

So many people concentrate on their faults and failures.

So many people have been taught about their original sin, and have never heard or been taught about their Original Blessing.

Our original blessing is the understanding that we foundationally, essentially loved and loveable.

That is very hard to accept because we so often feel hopelessly caught in our sins and failures.

So sometimes we try to buy our way out of feelings of worthlessness, or we try to dominate our way out of feeling so very unlovable...

Yet his way: the way of Compassion, Mercy, Forgiveness and Love, gets underneath,

begins to dismantle,

begins to dissolve these layers of self loathing, perhaps,

or the walls of fear or the fortress of unworthiness or inadequacy...

those layers of what ever it is that we try to hide or ignore and stuff way, way down and hope that no one ever finds out about it...

**His Way gets underneath all that and touches that deep, deep
well of the Presence of the Divine that is in every single human person,
bar none, including you and me...
and His Way reveals to us how much we are unconditionally loved...
just as we are, warts and all.
His Love, his way reveals just how beautiful we are...
incomplete, yes, and imperfect? of course!.... yet absolutely loved and treasured....**

**Nothing that we can buy can take us there.
Nothing that we can possess can take there...
Because it is already here...we are already there, but we don't see it.
We have to say "Yes" and open ourselves
to this amazing, mysterious unconditional Love that we are already swimming in!
We are like fish who cannot recognize the water that gives us life....**

**But the way we can come to know this Love that we are swimming in,
is when we let it flow through us
into the world around us!**

**His way is not a destination...
it is not a goal nor an end point,
but A WAY of living, of swimming.**

**Sometimes we get it, do it, be it...
and sometimes we don't.
But his way is one in which we are invited over and over and over again to begin again...
his way is one where there is never any humiliation or punishment...
it is we who do that to ourselves...**

**His Way, The way OF Forgiveness, Compassion, Generosity and Love
IS the way TO
true, unquenchable joy,
a peace that the world cannot give,
and an overwhelming feeling of gratitude and
the almost unbelievable feeling of being authentically loved...**

Money cannot buy any of this.

**This way of living and being is priceless, free and open to everyone
This is the Reign of heaven on Earth....**

and for this we can only whisper β “Thank you!” amen.