

**“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;
repent, and believe in the good news.’**

ok...

I’m really having trouble with the word ‘repent’...

Lord knows, it’s not that I never need to say I’m sorry...

it’s just that the word, repent, brings up all this guilt and fear.

It brings up images of hell fire and brimstone preachers

yelling “repent”, “repent”.... or else...

and I don’t buy that!

I certainly understand the need for apologies and amends,

and I do believe there is such a thing as healthy guilt

which can lead us to better behavior.

But to think we can pressure people into becoming more compassionate

and to act justly by threatening them... just doesn’t make sense.

So, of course then I ask myself the question

is that really how Jesus called his disciples?

Did he really get people to follow him, to give up their families and

their livelihood by intimidating them? I don’t think so!!

You probably know this already,

but the word that has been translated as ‘repent’ for centuries

and has been fuel for the fire and brimstone

is the ancient Greek word, ‘metanoia’.

Some modern scholars interpret metanoia not as repent, but rather to mean:

“turn around” or “change your mind”.

They say that Jesus was telling us that we need to turn our lives around,

turn our behavior around, change the way we are thinking...

ok...that’s better....

But here's something else that is very interesting...

Other scholars emphasize the fact that the word metanoia is

a combination of two other ancient Greek words:

**'meta' which means not just big but bigger than big...meta can mean 'HUGE'
or cosmic....**

And "noia" which comes from the Greek word 'gnosis'

which means knowledge.

So metanoia, according to these scholars.. literally means

"cosmic knowledge or big knowledge"

According to Cynthia Beaugeault who is one of those scholars

as well as an Episcopalian priest

metanoia is God consciousness....

God consciousness is seeing the world through the eyes and the heart of the Holy One...

and when we can see and love that way,

we do help to create the Reign of Heaven on Earth,

we recognize the Reign of God come near...

So perhaps we can translate Jesus' proclamation is this way:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;

open yourself to God Consciousness

and see the Reign of Heaven on Earth...

live in the Reign of God NOW

and believe in this Good news"!

Hmm...now that has a totally different feel than the hellfire and brimstone.

It even has a different feel from just changing our bad habits...

this invitation from Jesus actually feels less than a set of new rules,

and more like a new way seeing our selves, our lives and our God....

**Could this understanding of metanoia
be closer to what Jesus was trying to do?**

**Could he have been more concerned with a person's perception of reality
than punishing people when they didn't follow the Law?**

I believe that the answer is yes and here's why:

**I am sure that you remember Jesus did not hang out with the goody two
shoes of his day.**

**He hung around with the vagrants, the disconnected, those considered
unclean and sinful.**

He *never, ever* threatened them!

**The only people he ever got angry with were all those "good people" who
thought they were in God's favor because they followed all the Temple rules
and then passed judgment and punishment on everybody else.**

But to all those other 'sinful' people...

**Jesus constantly reassured them of God's love,
he fed them and clothed them and healed them.**

**He wanted to convince them that they were worth everything
in God's eyes no matter what they had done..**

**He gave his life trying to convince anyone and everyone
of the trustworthiness and faithfulness
of God's love for them, no matter what. Period.**

**When people understood this "Good News" the Good News of God's love...
they saw themselves and their world differently.
and then they began to change their lives:**

**they began to live differently...
they began to love differently.**

**Jesus wanted people to see with eyes of Love...
and thus have a true change of heart,**

**He passionately us wanted people to live in a new world with a new
consciousness where the Love of God offered a safe and secure ground
so that they could live their lives peacefully and joyfully
even with all of the uncertainties that being human brings.**

**He invited people to live in the Kingdom of God
right here, on this good green earth.....right now, in this life.**

**Because Jesus understood, when you live in the Kingdom of God,
when you take on Kingdom consciousness
you live compassionately and justly and kindly
whether there is a rule for it or not!**

That is his call to us as well!

And he wants us to live in this new consciousness too!

**This new consciousness of Love, this Kingdom consciousness, allows
us to see the inner workings of the Spirit in our lives.**

**This new consciousness allows us to see the presence of God freely,
fully and abundantly present everywhere and in everyone.**

**This new consciousness grows our hearts large
and we find ourselves much more capable of living compassionately,**

with kindness and mercy and with joy!

This new consciousness is our way into the future.

**It is the way which offers hope not only for ourselves and
our children's children...but for all of creation.**

And perhaps today there has never been a greater urgency for this new consciousness.

**Today, there are 7 billion people living on this one planet that has been the
same size since there were just a few of us..**

Cultures and religions are co mingling like never before....

**All of this interconnection demands new eyes and larger hearts
perhaps than we have ever needed before...**

So the question is of course: will we accept Jesus' invitation into this new consciousness?

Remember: it is not just a theoretical question...

**it is a question of the mind and the heart that will determine the future
for all of life on Earth...**

Hear him call you to join him this Day:

“The time is fulfilled! Enter into the new consciousness

where you see with the eyes of God and

and you love with a heart as large as the Holy One...

These are sure signs that the kingdom of God has come near.

***This* is the Good news that I have come to proclaim!!”**

This is the invitation and call of Jesus...

What is your answer? amen.