

“THE KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST: NOT OF THIS WORLD”

He fed more than five thousand people with a few loaves of bread and some fish. He walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee in the middle of one stormy night, invited Simon Peter to walk on the water with him and then got into the fishing boat and calmed the storm by his command.

He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. And restored to life the son of the Widow of Nain. He called his friend Lazarus out of the tomb after he had been dead four days.

He cured blind people, deaf people, crippled people, and lepers. He was a man of miraculous powers. So when he hangs on the cross with nails in his hands and hears the taunts to “come down off that cross and then we’ll believe” does it ever dawn on us that Jesus indeed could come down off that cross? That the only reason he stayed on that cross was not because of the nails but because of his will to do so? Jesus does what he does for a reason. He has a plan he is putting into action. The kingdom of God is being established and not just for back then but for all time. It is about the in-breaking of forgiving, sacrificing love. And the victory of such love back then and for ever after. Yes. In Jesus the kingdom of God is at hand. How does it show itself? Please listen.

The following is a blog from the website *Blessed Is She* that appeared recently from a woman named Liz Kelly.

*I’ll be bold: I think I had a “mini-vision.” It happened on the Mount of Beatitudes. Some years after my divorce, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, on our last full day there, our priest led us through a thorough litany of forgiveness followed by a healing service. We lined up under the ancient trees, forgiving, and begging forgiveness, and as the priest prayed, the Spirit stirred. Dressed in his alb, the priest moved from person to person, laying on hands and offering a private word. At one point, he turned in such a way that I could see his face. As long as I live, I will never forget that moment. It was the priest—only it wasn’t. It was my ex-husband.*

*Dressed in dazzling white, moving from pilgrim to pilgrim, praying and blessing, he was beaming with an indescribable beauty, freedom, and joy. And I believe in that moment, that I was seeing my ex-husband in Heaven. All of the wounds and strife, every anxiety that had ever plagued him, had just been washed away and he was as he was meant to be: free and whole and ministering to God’s people. It flooded my spirit with peace and joy. I knew down to my bones that this version of him really existed. Maybe it was just a work of my very fine imagination, but I believe I was given a little “vision” of who my ex-husband was meant to be, of who he really was, healed from all the wounds and sin of the world, when all of the corruption and injustice had been redeemed. For a flash of a moment, I was seeing him the way the Father did.*

*Some years later, he died, and I know—at least one day—he will rest not only in peace, but in perfection. I wonder if sometimes God doesn't give us these little glimpses so we will remember that He is "not God of the dead but of the living, for to him all are alive" (Luke 20:38) and fully alive, whole, and a magnificent reflection of His healing glory.*

Yesterday I was with a few of my priest friends part of a prayer group that has been meeting monthly since Seminary days. One of them has just gone through a very difficult time both physically and spiritually. He almost died but he did not and he almost lost all but he did not. He tells me yesterday that he has been praying about Psalm 23. You know it. The Lord is my shepherd. You could probably recite it by heart. He can. He was talking about the part where the Lord says "I have set a table before you in the sight of your foes." In his imagination he has pictured the Lord speaking directly to him. "I am establishing your table. Right here. AND. You can have anyone you want around that table with you. AND. I will wait on all of you. My friend said I have the Blessed Mother on my right and assorted close friends and loved ones around the table. The Lord has a towel over his arm and he is in the role of waiter. He is waiting on table — to serve me at my table which he has made for me.

And so, what is the question? The question is: Will I believe that this is really what he wants to do. The question is: Will I let him? The question is: Despite my sins, will I allow the Lord to enter into my life and make me the person he most wants me to be? Will I let him Him? Let Him what? Let Him say to me:

You are the pearl of great price.

Well done good and faithful servant even though you have sins.

You are my beloved in whom I am well pleased.

You are Lazarus whom I call out of your tomb.

You are the paralyzed young man whom I enable to walk again.

You are the One I died for.

You are the one I want with me in my kingdom for all eternity.

You are the one I have saved.

Will you dare to believe? Will you let me do for you what I did for that ex-husband in the woman's vision? Will you put your faith in the power of my love to transform EVERYTHING?

My friends, each of us is love like that. Let us help each other to believe, to open to that grace and to dare to believe that we are included in the Lord's invitation into the Kingdom of God. Issued by Christ the King from his cross on Calvary two thousand years ago.