

Splendor of the Kingdom 1

'This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel' (MK 1:14, 15).

We should never reduce Jesus to a tidy set of teachings or ethics. He shatters our controlling tendencies with one touch of His healing, delivering hand. Jesus advances a new universe—the rule and reign of Heaven on earth. He plunges into our depths, casts out darkness, and raises us up as children of Light, beloved sons and daughters of the Father. Tidy? God's Kingdom is at best disorienting.

This Kingdom comes through joyful declaration of the Gospel, with signs and wonders following--the Word confirmed by spiritual power. As St. Mark recorded, "The people were amazed at Jesus: 'A new teaching, and with power!'" (MK 1:27). How can He not shake our little universes?! God has come! God comes to you! Heaven could not hold Him back from descending into our messy lives and breaking the low ceiling that defines us as everything but beloved. His huge 'yes' to us liberates our freedom to give shaky assent to Him. He takes His advantage. He becomes our stronghold of light in a dismal world--the luminous foundation of our very beings.

I witnessed how 'Kingdom-centric' our Living Waters world is while working with friends Peter Herbeck and Ralph Martin, both pioneers of thoughtful Spirit-filled advances throughout the Church. These guys spearhead a television show on EWTN called 'The Choices We Face'—they filmed a segment with me (under good lights I look a vital 72—see for yourself when the show airs sometime in mid-2018) and commented afterwards: 'You have hope for persons facing big sexual challenges because you anchor that hope in the power of the Gospel.'

True that. I am continuously puzzled by persons who hear our hopeful stories of real struggle and real release and respond with: 'I don't believe in reparative therapy' or 'Jesus does not always heal people.' Huh?

Jesus came to reclaim our lives from the grip of the world and the devil, and to persuade us in love to let go of the fleshly attachments that enslave us. That is true for all persons who seek Him. His descent and ascent is our ticket to paradise—eternity starts today with Jesus. Yes, struggles remain: these keep us humble and reliant on Jesus' members (how insufferable is the one who declares moral perfection!).

But to reduce Jesus' radical obedience at Calvary to a benefit for 'the lucky few' and to count oneself as 'untouched', 'made for' LGBT liberties—that is a lie against the Gospel. Yes, in our dullness we can refuse to cooperate with Jesus. And yes, He waits for us to invite His Kingdom to rule and reign in us afresh. God can and does touch all persons who turn toward Almighty Mercy.

Freedom from sin and disorder of all kinds begins, progresses, and ends with the glorious splendor

of God's-Kingdom-come in Jesus Christ. The Kingdom has come. The Kingdom is here. That Kingdom can burn like an unquenchable fire inside you (LK 17:21) and make everything new. Choose this day who will ignite you.

'We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star rises in your hearts' (2P 1:19).