

Our Spiritual Core

If God came to you in a dream tonight — like God did with Solomon, thousands of years of ago — and said:

“Ask me for anything you want and I’ll give it to you.”

What might you ask for?

In other words: what is the treasure buried in your field of life that you would do anything to find, ...that you would sell everything to obtain? What is the pearl of great price in your dreams that you would sell all for? ...give up everything for?

Sisters and brothers, just what is the ‘kingdom,’ ‘kin-dom,’ ‘realm,’ ‘reign’ of God that Jesus, in Matthew’s Gospel, has been addressing in parables these last few Sundays: the sewer and the seeds; the mustard seed; the yeast and the dough; the weeds and the wheat; the buried treasure; the fine Pearl?

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The kingdom — the realm of God — is our Spiritual Core, our heart-of-hearts, our Center — where the spark of God dwells. The kingdom— realm of God is within us and among us. Discovering this reign of God – this hidden treasure – this pearl, is an awakening to the realization that we belong to the God who dwells within. *Namasté*, the familiar greeting in the Hindu tradition, is a recognition of that spark in one another.

Discovering the reign of God is a recognition that we are cherished and cared for by God, and that we are called to commit ourselves to our deepest and most noble values. This treasure is the ‘price’ – the measure of worth – that gives meaning to the present and, it’s fire draws us into the future:

- ❖ it’s feeds our inner hunger,
- ❖ it satisfies our inner thirst.

The realization of the Kingdom of God — the realm of God — excites us as a child is excited at Christmas or a bride and groom on the morning of their wedding.

The Treasure — The Pearl:

- ❖ has the calming effect of a nursing-mother,
- ❖ the warmth of the lover's embrace,
- ❖ the approval of a friend's smile.

Sisters and brothers, the reign of God is the fulfillment of our deepest desires, our fondest hopes. Nothing in the world — *nothing* — can compare with it. As the parables point out: we'd be willing to sacrifice *everything* to obtain it.

What's most amazing *is that we need not work to obtain it — nor can we earn it in any way*. This pearl is given to us by God: it is our Spiritual Core, the "DNA" of what makes us fully human and fully alive!

It sounds so simple ... and it is..., but so often we go through our lives frantically searching in all the wrong places to fulfill that thirst, that hunger for life...; and we're left frustrated and disappointed.

Two important points made in our Gospel:

First, Jesus make it so clear, in so many ways, in the pages of the Gospel, that chasing after money, control, power, pleasure, status, security, is chasing after fake pearls and worthless trinkets, that will never, never, never give us the fulfillment — will never quench the thirst — will never fill the hole in the soul; will never give us the life — the peace — the love we are seeking.

Husband: "You know, dear, I'm going to work hard and someday we're going to be rich!"

Wife: "We are already rich, dear, for we have each other. Someday — maybe — we'll have money."

Secondly: Believe it or not, we often shy away from the treasure of God's realm within us, because to embrace our Spiritual Core can turn our lives upside-down:

- We may have to sell all the trinkets that we may be holding onto tightly, in order to embrace it,

- what we previously pursued and put all our marbles into, may not attract us as it once did...,

Examples:

- *meaningful* work may become more valuable to us than *well paid* work;
- the people we once sought after as friends and companions may no longer be capable of being soulmates....

In other words: embracing that Pearl — that Spiritual Core — our heart-of-hearts — can become dangerous and disruptive – as the lives of the mystics and prophets attest:

We know: Jesus gave up everything he valued: family, home, security... because – for him – there was no treasure greater than the preaching and witnessing the Kingdom;

When St. Francis of Assisi kissed the leper, he discovered Kingdom within and left everything – even his clothes – to follow the dream of his heart;

When Dorothy Day gave birth to her child, she woke up to the spark of the divine within her, gave up her bohemian-agnostic lifestyle and that spark within her produced a fire in her heart that changed the face of the Catholic Church;

Today we commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, celebrating the courage of activists, like then eight-year-old Jennifer Keelen, who on March 12, 1990 got out of her wheelchair and crawled up the 83 marble steps of the US Capital, bringing national attention to the cause of rights for the diversely-abled, and inspiring Congressional passage of the ADA.

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As John Lewis, who died over the last week, at the age of eighty— the son of sharecroppers, who survived a brutal beating by police during the landmark 1965 voting rights march in Selma Alabama and at the age of 23 was a keynote speaker at the historic 1963 March on Washington — said at the time of the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando:

“We have been too quiet for too long... there comes a time when you have to say something... have to make a little noise... have to move your feet. This is the time!”

Sisters and brothers, this pearl — this treasure — buried within us, is unique to each one of us. We are called *not* to be Solomon..., *not* to be the historical Jesus..., *not* to be Dorothy Day..., Francis of Assisi, John Lewis, or Jennifer Keelen...; but to become fully the person God created each one of us to be.

In the words of Jesuit Fr. Pedro Arrupe:

“Nothing is more practical than finding God – that is, then falling in love quite absolute final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”

Amen!