

September 1, 2020

One of the reasons that the Gospel that Jesus proclaimed falls on so many deaf ears is that the Gospel stories are ignored, instead a few verses or words are taken out of the story and are interpreted as either miracles or explicit plain spoken straight forward teachings come from the mouth of God.

The details of the stories have been ignored in an attempt to get to the “point” and that is exactly what the Gospel writers did not intend because there is no one point just as we are not created as just one point, the whole of the Gospel texts, like me and you as far as “God” is concerned, are like honey from the comb.

In my understanding the four Gospel texts never tell of miracles detached from the context of the entire text nor are they ever unambiguous clear explicit teachings detached and independent from the entire text.

No matter how much I say this, most of you will not believe me, as what we learned in grade school catechisms has a staying power beyond all measure unless we have had one or more seriously transforming occurrences or experiences in our lives.

I want to return to last Sunday’s Gospel story where you might remember that Peter is once again the “plot turner” but this time he is rebuked and not blessed, named a “Satan” by Jesus for making God as a surrogate for his own ego.

Peter returns to his dominant consciousness because he does not want to accept that he has to change his mind, repent, about what it means to be a Christian, a disciple of Christ, one willing to confront the powers of violence without more violence.

This story rebuking Peter is juxtaposed with the prior story in which Peter is “blessed” because he recognizes in Jesus the “Son of Man” the fully realized totally without violence human in communion with God’s Love.

And then Jesus tells Peter that this insight and the consciousness that allowed him to know who he is, is the kind of consciousness that is the way of thinking that leads to heaven on earth, but that kind of thinking, thinking that leads to

heaven on earth, recognizing the Kingdom of God at hand, is not easy to hang onto because we have so many pre-recorded “tapes” running in our minds that jump into the forefront of our thinking, tapes placed there by years and years of walking through our lives without even having to inhabit them.

That episode of the stormy night the strong winds and Jesus and Peter walking on water is another version of these stories, I think, unfortunately it is usually passed off as a miracle that proves Jesus is the Son of God because he can walk on water omitting the “plot turner” Peter’s fall and cry, Lord save me! And the question that Jesus poses to Peter, Why, did you doubt?

A question that I believe Jesus meant to lead Peter to humility and away from his arrogance and self-confident reliance on his own powers. Doubting is a state of consciousness that can be good, or it can be bad, depending on what we are in doubt about.

Peter wants to hold onto the thought that being a follower of Christ, a Christian, leads to exceptionalism, being right above all others and having a power over all others, that comes with the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and, God knows, popes and prelates and priests and people of all kinds have spared no expense in being right and exercising power over others in the name of Christ.

In these times of overstated confidence in the power of self-appointed and anointed Christian exceptionalists, infallible spokespersons for God, reflecting on the stories of Peter might be a good corrective to our sense of moral certainty in this nation of ours.