

March 27, 2021

Read Mark 9

Key verses: Mark 9:1

And he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.'

The Kingdom at Hand

I have a bad habit, perhaps you have it too; when someone doesn't show up for an appointment or meeting and doesn't call or text, I assume that person is irresponsible, undependable. Sometimes I'm right, but not always. Sometimes situations arise that prevent a person from keeping their plans or communicating with me. I've even learned that the person I was supposed to meet became quite ill or was injured and couldn't contact me, and then I feel rather embarrassed and ashamed for having assumed something negative about that person. The Spirit has been reminding me more frequently of this bad habit of mine, and I'm getting better at not judging, but it still happens to this work-in-progress.

At the core of this bad habit of making negative assumptions about people is narcissism, a focus on self and how the actions of others affect *my* self. Narcissism is everywhere; people usually make decisions based upon how that decision impacts *their* self. As much as I cherish our democratic form of government I see it as far from perfect, because democracy is rule by majority and the majority vote out of *self* interest, not the interest of other people who may be suffering because no one seems to take *their* interests to heart.

Jesus describes for us a system of government that is better than majority rule; Jesus describes a system where God rules. It is system where people are motivated by the needs of others, a system where the greatest among us are those who serve others. It is an ideal place, but it is a place where we can dwell here and now if we choose to. Jesus said to a man who agreed that the greatest of all God's commandments was to love God with all one's heart and mind and soul and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." Jesus did not mean that this man was close to death but rather that he was close to *life* – *ETERNAL life* that characterizes God's kingdom. We can be kingdom dwellers if we choose to be.

Prayer: Lord God, forgive us for our doubts that lead us to act in selfish ways and to think selfish thoughts. Strengthen our faith in your goodness so that we can act on that faith, loving you and our neighbors as we love ourselves. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.