

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

The Asylum Of God's Love

By Ken Woodley

On his way to heaven, Jesus was walking through this land, where he found us desperately seeking asylum in a world that would not grant it. All of us were lepers in some way, or viewed as lepers by the key-holders, moneychangers, and other powers-that-be.

We cried out to him: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" and we ran to him as he began walking toward us.

We immediately felt the radiance of his love and, astonishingly, there was no border separating us from Jesus and that love.

There was no wall.

No barbed wire to keep us away.

No cages to lock us inside if we got too close.

His arms were spread wide, but not so wide as the healing love we felt coming from within his heart and soul.

We fell prostrate at his feet, incredulous at this generosity of spirit.

"Get up and go on your way," Jesus told us with a smile. "Your faith has made you well."

All of us were healed by this love: the Samaritans, the Guatemalans and Hondurans, and the Americans, too. All of us lepers no more. Even if some people continued to treat us as lepers, we were not lepers to each other.

Touched by love and grace, we went out into the world to touch others with that same grace and love.

Without exception, and telling the truth.

There is no more explicit message in the ministry of Jesus than the inclusion of everyone in the asylum of God's loving embrace.

Even Samaritans. Even us.

And there is only one way to feel about that borderless love: joyful gratitude.

Being grateful for all of our joys, both great and small, increases their resonance within us. Gratitude for blessings deepens the blessing, keeps the ripples of the blessing widening out in ever greater circles across the still waters of our soul.

Being grateful takes us beneath the surface down into the deep well of joy that offers to quench our longing for something more. Gratitude keeps the blessing alive and by our side. Gratitude keeps us closer to Jesus and to God because we are more able to recognize the presence of their Holy Spirit.

And that lesson of gratitude can be applied to the very smallest of blessings, sharpening our senses so that blessing follows blessing.

We will become more sensitive, and so more alive to small miracles that may no longer feel like blessings because they happen so frequently. The blessings that have become routine, perhaps even redundant or—ironically—invisible because we see and experience them every day.

The smell of bread in a toaster.

The sound of a bird.

The touch of a raindrop on our cheek.

Shade on a hot day.

Sunshine on our skin when the day is cool.

Clouds painted by the rising sun, then brush-stroked again as the sun drops behind a line of trees.

The moon seen between the limbs of fluttering leaves.

The voice of someone you love, someone who loves you, too.

A child wrapping their hand around one of your fingers.

Words upon a page.

Three notes becoming a song.

The single bloom of just one flower.

The spreading colors of autumn in a single leaf.

We are surrounded by miracles and they were meant for us all to share as children of God.

As brothers and sisters of Jesus, who was, himself, born a foreigner to us on the other side of the world but who walks by our side every day that we ask him to.

On his way to heaven.

On our way with him.

Asylum granted to us all.

