

We Belong to the Kingdom of God

The story is told of Frederick William IV of Prussia who once visited a school and quizzed the students. He held up a stone and asked the children: to what kingdom does this belong? They responded: mineral. He then, pointed to a flower and asked: to what kingdom does this belong? They answered: plant. He then pointed to a bird flying by outside the window and asked: to what Kingdom does that belong? They replied: animal.

Then he asked: now, to what kingdom do I belong. He had raised a profound theological question. To what kingdom do we belong?

On a literal sense, we are, off course, part and parcel of the animal kingdom. I belong to the same kingdom as my dog Ruff. He has many human traits. He can pout, he can get excited, he has a temper.

But yet, Ruff does not understand time. He cannot grasp that there is a point beyond which he will not live. Only humans can grasp time. Ruff cannot tell right from wrong. It is not within him to share. His limited mind cannot set goals. All of those are human traits. The magnificent thing for humans is that it is within us to rise above purely animal desires and become a part of another kingdom----the Kingdom of God. (from Staff, www.eSermons.com)

Pekapoo puppy:

William Hinson recalls the time when his children were younger, and one child's pet died. Dr. Hinson says that he practiced "replacement therapy." When one pet died it was replaced by another pet. One time his youngest daughter Cathy's cat died. Together they went to find another pet. Cathy selected a tiny peekapoo puppy.

When they got home Dr. Hinson agreed to build a doghouse for the new pet to live in. "The only kind of dog I knew very much about was a really big bird dog," he recalls, "so when I built the doghouse, I built a very large house." In fact, the house was too large for the small dog. The size of the doghouse scared the little peekapoo puppy. No matter what they did the little dog would not go near the doghouse.

In disgust, Dr. Hinson went inside, and sat down in the den while his daughter, Cathy, stood outside crying over her dad's impatience and the refusal of her puppy to cooperate. After a while, Cathy got down on her hands and knees and crawled into the doghouse herself. When she crawled into it something wonderful happened. That little puppy trotted right in beside her and stretched out on the doghouse floor. Before too long the dog was taking a nap. All the shadows now stood still for him, and all the fear was taken out of the darkness, because the one whom he loved and trusted had preceded him into that dark and frightening place. It no longer caused him fear. [William H. Hinson. *Triumphant Living in Turbulent Times* (Nashville: Dimensions for Living, 1993), pp. 119-120.]

There's a lesson here for us. We can surrender our wills to God's will, knowing that God loves us. Wherever He leads us, He will be with us. We don't have to enter dark doghouses alone. Saints trust in God and God alone. Saints submit their will to God's will.

To the world, the Beatitudes look like a formula for a disastrously dull and melancholy life. Instead, as C.S. Lewis wrote, the people around us think that money and sex and booze and the high life are as good as it gets. To folks like this the Beatitudes sound roaringly stupid. But such people are like an ignorant little child who says that he'd rather just go on making mud pies in some slaggy alley in the slums simply because he can't imagine what it means that you just invited him to go to the beach for the weekend. People in this world are far too easily pleased. They think mud pies is as good as it gets when really they and we all have been made for joy! Blessed are you if you know the joy that is our God in Christ for it changes everything!

Saint in Heaven saving his child:

"Her husband had died a few years before, and she had a young son who was born just before his father's death. One day when her son was at a neighbor's house, she suddenly sensed her husband was speaking to her. He seemed to be telling her that their son was drowning in a swimming pool. She ran next door to the neighbor's and found her son drowning in the pool, exactly as she sensed her husband telling her. She pulled her son out of the pool, just in time to save his life.

Why does this story move us so deeply? A story about a child's life being saved is certainly moving, but this story contains something more. A dead father is still there for his child, at the moment when he is needed most." [Matthew & Denis Linn and Sheila Fabricant, *Healing the Greatest Hurt* (Paulist Press), p. 144.]

God Shows Through

One Sunday as they drove home from church, a little girl turned to her mother and said, "Mommy, there's something about the preacher's message this morning that I don't understand." The mother said, "Oh? What is it?" The little girl replied, "Well, he said that God is bigger than we are. He said God is so big that He could hold the whole world in His hand. Is that true?" The mother replied, "Yes, that's true, honey." "But Mommy, he also said that God comes to live inside of us when we believe in Jesus as our Savior. Is that true, too?" Again, the mother assured the little girl that what the pastor had said was true.

With a puzzled look on her face the little girl then asked, "If God is bigger than us and He lives in us, wouldn't He show through?" That is what the beatitudes are about - God showing through. (by Jerry Shirley from *When God Shows Through*)