A Knock at the Door

Jesus said:
“Knock and the door will be opened to you.”
Matthew 7:7

If I’m in a grumpy mood, I do not receive well Jesus’ promise that the door will be opened to me if I but knock. After all, what about all of those times when I have knocked—when I have asked Christ to come to me in my hour of need and...nothing! I preached a homily about this last week and I said that maybe Jesus is trying to send us a more subtle message. After all, the metaphor implies that I will indeed be face-to-face with a closed door at times. Maybe Jesus is trying to say to us, “Yes, I will open it, but be patient while you are knocking on that closed door.”

That is what I said in my homily that day. I hope that insight helped someone in the congregation, but it didn’t help me. I was left unsatisfied. It seemed as though Jesus was trying to say something new to me about this passage and I was struggling to hear him. But then, later in the day, I heard the Lord say, “Mark, put your grumpiness aside for a moment and see that you are already on the inside of my house. You are already on the other side of that door.”

Then I thought about what a ridiculously good life I’ve had and how, in the end, Christ has always come through for me. When I’m clear-headed, it’s almost embarrassing how widely Christ has opened the door for me and how deeply into the house of God the Lord has led me.

But Christ wasn’t finished with me yet. “Now that you see that you are already in my house, in my name I want you to open the door for others.” I thought this verse was all about me and all along Jesus was trying to tell me to go and do for others what has already been done to me: go and open the door.

As the day went on, two true stories came to mind. First, a woman once told me that when she was a girl, her father was cruel to her. Decades later, he repented and came to deeply regret this. One day, her father came to visit her in her new home. She came to door to greet him but he wouldn’t go inside. “What’s wrong?” She asked. He looked at her with grave and mournful eyes and said, “I can’t enter your house without your forgiveness.” “I forgive you,” she said. And that was that. Both could enter the house and enter into a new relationship.

Years after hearing that story, I heard a similar one from a different woman. She had lived for decades with an abusive husband. Then he died suddenly and she was finally free of him. One day, in the midst of deep prayer, she saw him just outside the gates of Heaven. She looked right at him and said, with slow deliberation, “It’s all OK.” And then everything faded, but she could sense that he was now in Heaven. She said to me, “I know it sounds crazy, but it felt as though he was waiting for me to let him in!” It didn’t sound crazy at all.

And so here’s the question I’m left with—and that I leave you with: Is there someone who is waiting for you to open the door for them? In your prayerful imagination, or perhaps even in real life, might you look that person in the eye and say, “It’s all OK. Come, let us enter into the House of the Lord.”

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