

Heaven-Sent, Earth-Received

John 3:14-21

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John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Can I be honest with you all?

I have a lot of trouble with this scripture.

Belief?

Eternal Life?

Being saved. Being condemned?

Christianity only. A religion of rules and rewards

It's embarrassing.

I need alternatives to this understanding of this scripture verse.

Be-love. (Marcus Borg)

Others that I found this week:

Instead of believe in Jesus, believe **as** Jesus believed.

I am a beloved child of God. And so are you.

Leonard Cohen lyric;

Blessed are you O God whose presence illuminates outrageous evil

God loved. God gave

God loved, God gave right from the very beginning of time.

God gave us an entire universe with the great flaring forth that sang

I love you!!!!

First with elementary particles, then butterflies and the Beatles.

Heaven-sent

What did heaven send you this past week?

knowing that sometimes it comes in the form of looking directly at suffering

sometimes it comes from being bathed in beauty

And who thought of you as being heaven-sent?

I want to tell you about two people we were heaven-sent to me this week.

Jean Vanier:

The Templeton Foundation has just announced from London that has awarded the 2015 Templeton Prize to Jean Vanier,

for his innovative discovery of the central role of vulnerable people in the creation of a more just, inclusive and humane society.

The Templeton Prize, which has previously been awarded to Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama and others,

is one of the most prestigious honors in the world, and is valued at close to 1.7 million USD.

Jean Vanier is the founder of L'Arche, a Federation of 147 communities in 35 countries and on 5 continents.

In these communities, people with intellectual disabilities and those who accompany them share together,

a daily life rich in mutual relationships, offering an innovative way of living.

According to Jean Vanier, this prize honors primarily the most vulnerable among us, often marginalized in our societies, and to whom he attributes his discovery of what it means to be fully human.

It is these people who revealed to him that any person who has been previously rejected, when welcomed,

becomes a source of dialogue, of healing, of unity and of peace for our societies and our religions.

This network of communities began when Jean Vanier welcomed one person with intellectual disabilities into his home—

this network of humanity began when Jean Vanier

looked into the eyes of one lonely human being and said,

“You are beloved, you are a child of God.”

When asked what it does it mean to be fully human Jean Vanier answered:

To be human is to accept our fragility,
to remember the way in which we were brought into this world
needing to be the cared for by another human being

As we grow we begin the work of balancing the head and the heart.
expanding our understanding
and deepening the compassion
deepening our understand the laws of nature and the language of the heart

Jean Vanier acknowledges that many of us were raised in a loving family,
but many were not

To the extent that we were not raised in love as a child,
there is anguish, that becomes a wound.

That wound can be healed
when we experience being loved for who we are.

This calls for us to being open to others,
just as they are.

This calls for us to not being frightened of someone
who is different from us.

Jean Vanier sees so many people on our world who are frightened of each other.

So much fear,
so much protection,
so many walls

When we can let go of our fear of the other,

When we can let go of our need to prove
that we are better than someone else,
when we can look into the eyes of another person,
seeing their fragility, and their beloved nature,
we can begin to form communities
that reveal God's dream for all creation.

Someone else that I experienced as heaven-sent this last week.

Alan Turing

The Imitation Game (The movie)

159 million, million variables in the German Enigma machine.

The machine that Alan Turing invented could not decode the message fast enough, until it was given one line of the brief message that occurred in every message.

One line was enough to give Alan Turing's machine the clues it needed to decode the message in a few seconds.

It's a compelling story made more so because Alan Turing was not raised in love. He was different. Not only in his brilliance but also because he was gay. In Britain, up until 1967, it was illegal to be gay.

Illegal!

In the movie there was a line that was repeated several times. It was first said to Alan by his best friend, his first love, when he was a boy in boarding school

“Sometimes it is the people who no one imagines anything of
who do the things that no one can imagine.”

What is that we are called to imagine as we look at Jesus lifted up on the cross?

(Referring to the Gospel passage from the Gospel of John. Some of the following thoughts are taken from Richard Rohr's daily e-mail, which I didn't actually get to last Sunday.)

We are invited to let go of our identification with being merely human—
and all the humiliation of our human faults and limitations—
which is a lot of letting go.

In letting go of your shame, guilt, and powerlessness,
you do not lose yourself,
but fall into your foundational and grounded self,
just as Jesus let himself fall into the arms of John the Baptist
and the everflowing love of God in the Jordan River
This is your True Self,
which now stands revealed, substantial, and infinite—
as you—
your own unique amalgam of quite ordinary humanity and divine DNA.

Imagine that.

“Sometimes it is the people who no one imagines anything of
who do the things that no one can imagine.”

Looking at Jesus on the cross offers humanity an utterly new possibility and
dignity from God's side.

Christianity is not the "only true religion,"
but Christianity, in its mature forms,
is a code-breaker, a short cut,
a simplification about what is happening within reality.

I doubt if we could even imagine that the divine and the human
could be united into one person
without Jesus putting it together for us.

I do believe that the Jesus mystery holds, manifests, affirms,
and enjoys the entire pattern, process,
and privilege of what it means to be a human person.
Believe it first in him,
and then you can perhaps dare to believe it in yourself.

There was one phrase that enabled Alan Turing to break the Enigma Code.
Same for Jean Vanier.

God loved, God gave.
Begin there and everything,
even darkness,
falls into place.