

My Father's Mansions

Sunday, January 14, 2017

By Roger Mock

So, I know we just came out of the Christmas season. My tree just went out the door this weekend. I'm not meaning to jump start Easter or anything, but circumstances have led me to look at a passage from the Last Supper today. Here's the scene. Jesus and his apostles have just eaten the Passover Supper, the "Last Supper." They're starting to get the picture of what's coming down the pike and they're more than a little concerned. And so we have this very consoling speech from Jesus and it starts,

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am." (John 14:1-4)

It's a curious passage in a couple of ways. What are these many rooms or mansions? [For some reason a word that means "dwelling places" got translated to read "mansions" in the King James] Why does Jesus have to go there and get the rooms ready, "make the beds up" and what not? What is the meaning of "to prepare a place for you?" Maybe he's just recognizing their fear that they are about to be homeless both in the sense of being without their Master who has become their home, and also in a very literal way. They've left lives they can perhaps no longer return to.

The disciples are bereft. They cannot imagine their lives without this man, who has completely upended those lives and opened their hearts and minds to a totally new vision of who they are and what their lives mean. Can they just return to the dailyness of life after having been witness to such glory? They are already feeling themselves to be orphaned children.

Jesus speaks directly to this a little farther on:

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' (John 14:18-20)

This last part – I am in my Father and you in me and I in you – he keeps repeating mantra-like throughout this discourse. This is the bigger picture they must not lose sight of in the coming days.

I don't believe he's saying I'm going up there to heaven and get things fixed up for you so when you die someday, we can all hang out again.

Everything he's talking about is real and true right now. There is room in my Father's house for you right now, for everybody. No matter who you are, you've got a place there. An old spiritual says "There's plenty good room, plenty good room in my Father's kingdom. Just choose your seat and sit down!"

When Jesus told them that they knew the place where he was going,

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'
(John 14:5-7)

Much has been made of these words – I am the way...

Christians have used it to exclude other faiths – "If you don't join our church you ain't goin to heaven. Sorry, but it says so right here." But Jesus is speaking here as the Christ, that same Christ present that resides in each of us, that place of Divinity. The Gospel of John is full of these "I Am" statements. We talk a lot about the significance of I Am in Unity.

In fact Jesus uses the words *I Am* 45 times in John!

Referring to Jesus' words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me," Charles Fillmore wrote that, "Right here Jesus emphasized the spiritual man, the I AM in man, as the only way by which man can enter the kingdom of God."

As you know, *I Am* is the name given to Moses on Mount Horeb – Jehovah or Yahweh. I Am That I Am.

Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, The God of your ancestors has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name? what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I Am has sent me to you.'"
(Exodus 13:13-14)

There is a metaphysical teaching hidden in the story. Horeb literally means desert or solitude. So it's a high place – a mountain – and a place of solitude. The story

invites us to enter the place of solitude within our own hearts and minds and connect with that highest principle, the Divine Presence – the I Am.

The *I am the Way* passage is referenced in *A Course in Miracles*, which I believe to be a teaching of Jesus for our time. In Chapter 7 it reads, (Jesus speaking):

When I said "I am with you always," I meant it literally. I am not absent to anyone in any situation. Because I am always with you, *you* are the way, the truth and the life. You did not make this power, any more than I did. It was created to be shared, and therefore cannot be meaningfully perceived as belonging to anyone at the expense of another.

(*A Course in Miracles*, Text, Ch7.III.1)

I am in the Father and you in me and I in you. And if I say, "I am the way, the truth and the life," you can say the same thing **if** you are speaking from that place of Oneness, from Christ Consciousness.

We can get the idea from the Gospel that Jesus is talking about a far-off heaven. But no. It's here and now. So why is he going somewhere else? Why is there this idea of another place of some sort? It's because we are caught here in the unreal – the place where we experience separation from God and everyone and everything. He is directing us to the Real; to the Truth; to the Life. He's saying, No, you are not separate. I am in the Father and you in me and I in you. Right now. Right here. If we can completely surrender to that, we will know it. We will know that we are never alone. We will know that "I and the Father are one."

A paragraph or two later in Chapter 7 of the *Course* it says,

To be in the Kingdom is merely to focus your full attention on it. As long as you believe you can attend to what is not true, you are accepting conflict as your choice. Is it really a choice? It seems to be, but seeming and reality are hardly the same. You who *are* the Kingdom are not concerned with seeming. Reality is yours because you *are* reality.

(*A Course in Miracles*, Text, Ch7.III.4)

The thing about Jesus is that he learned to do this. To focus his full attention on the Kingdom; to hear only the Father's voice. This is one way in which he has prepared a place for us. He has paved the way and, being with us always, can lead us down that path.

Another I am statement from the Gospel of John is:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. I am the vine, you are the branches." (John 15:1)

If you've seen a grapevine you know that the main trunk or vein is composed of the same substances as the branches—Jesus and all of humanity possess the same potential. We are to learn to do all the works Jesus did and more. With the Father as vine grower, Jesus as the trunk, and humanity as the branches, we are all One.

Jesus came “to prepare a place for us.” – You might also say he came to bring life back into the vine, to get the juices flowing, to be the vine that extends it to the branches, so they can experience what it means to bear fruit, to be extensions of Divine life.

So we can say,

I am a branch of the Divine; the substance of Divinity flows through me.

In the passage we began with, the metaphor is that of the house. In my Father's house there are many mansions or rooms. Jesus is getting the house that was in disarray back in order so we can be at home in God. And so we can use the affirmation Rev. Crystal had prepared for us for today:

I Am in my Father's house.