

THE TALE OF A CERTAIN CENTURION

(Luke 7:1-10)

We live in a world of KINGDOMS, KINGS, and ROYAL SUBJECTS

- Even the modern world is a KINGDOM

- The KING rules through his Word

- His ROYAL SUBJECTS that understand this will...
 - Exhibit humility

 - Exercise faith

 - Please their King

- The moral(s) of the story
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QUOTES OF NOTE

It is possible to think of the Gospel and our preaching of it as...a speaking of the truth about the way things are. And it is possible to think of that truth as tragedy, as comedy, and as fairy tale. The Gospel is bad news before it is good news. It is the news that man is a sinner.... That is the tragedy. But it is also the news that he is loved anyway, cherished, forgiven, bleeding to be sure but also bled for. That is the comedy.... The news of the Gospel is that extraordinary things happen...just as in fairy tales extraordinary things happen.... All together they are the truth. (Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth*)

The story of the New Testament is the story of people's increasing understanding of who Jesus was. (Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*)

You enter the extraordinary by way of the ordinary. (Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth*).

As for the king of the kingdom himself, whoever would recognize him? He has no form or comeliness. His clothes are what he picked up at a rummage sale. He hasn't shaved for weeks. He smells of mortality...with pants that don't fit and a split lip; in the black comedy of the sign they nailed over his head where the joke was written out in three languages so nobody would miss the laugh.

But the whole point of the fairy tale of the Gospel is, of course, that he is the king in spite of everything. The frog turns out to be the prince, the ugly duckling the swan, the little gray man who asks for bread the great magician with the power of life and death in his hands, and though the steadfast tin soldier falls into the flames, his love turns out to be fireproof. There is no less danger and darkness in the Gospel than there is in the Brothers Grimm, but beyond and above all there is the joy of it, this tale of a light breaking into the world that not even the darkness can overcome.

That is the Gospel, this meeting of darkness and light and the final victory of light. That is the fairy tale of the Gospel with, of course, the one crucial difference from all other fairy tales, which is that the claim made for it is that it is true, that it not only happened once upon a time but has kept on happening ever since and is happening still. To preach the Gospel in its original power and mystery is to claim in whatever way the preacher finds it possible to claim it that once upon a time is this time, now. (Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth*)