



Contemplation in the Streets

Seeing Jesus in the midst of life in the inner city

December 08

Dear Family and Friends:

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. . . And all went to be registered, each to his own town.”

One man decrees and the whole world moves. Did it matter how many lives were disrupted? Did it matter to what extent people were inconvenienced? Did it matter that those who were barely scraping by in supporting their families had to suddenly leave their work to travel to another town at their own expense so Caesar could count the people? Most of those who had to travel had no voice and could never hope to sway the powers that be. Like Joseph and Mary (nine months pregnant) they just had to go. And when they arrived at the little town of Bethlehem they didn’t even have the money or influence to get a room but ended up in the stable. No one among “the powers” cared about these two peasants. They were just two among many being moved by those who rule the kingdoms of the earth. ***“Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”***

“And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way... Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region.”

Megalomaniacs have existed in every place in greater or lesser degrees. Men and women demonically inspired who are deluded to think that their aspirations trump everyone else’s. They will do all that they can to stay in power or obtain it, even kill their own children or the children of others. Who can stay their hand, especially the poor? So Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus, displaced refugees, while other parents lost their infant boys receiving an incalculable heart-wound. You have heard of similar stories - Myanmar, Darfur, Somalia, Zimbabwe, and many others. ***“Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”***



Young Myanmar Restaurant workers

“He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.”

The word of the Lord that came through Mary’s prophetic exaltation, stated that at the coming of Jesus, his salvation, would see the humble exalted and the hungry filled while the rich and powerful were brought down and sent away empty. The promise is sure and the Lord seems to be doing some scattering these days, but the rich

often have the means and know-how to protect themselves, while the poor are vulnerable. Today, while banks and investment firms flounder or fail, the worker without much financial margin often pays the larger cost. And many, rich and poor have been seduced by the same spirit of mammon, wracking up debt beyond their means and trampling store employees to death (“Wal-Mart worker dies in rush; two killed in toy store” CNN.com) in order to satisfy the thirst for more. ***“Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”***

The Good News of Christmas

“Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” As we follow Joseph and Mary towards Bethlehem, two uprooted, unknown peasants who had no influence among the earthly kingdoms, we marvel at the mystery that they carried with them - the kingdom of God. They could not tap earthly kings for resources and influence, but theirs was the King who holds all kings in his hand and whose heavenly treasures are infinite. Though it seemed that they were moved by the pleasure and plan of an earthly king, they were actually moved by the One who orders all things according to his eternal purpose. As they laid him in a manger and treasured in their hearts the words spoken over him by shepherds and magi, we may ponder with them that this One is the “Maker of the moon and the Author of the faith that can make the mountains move.” Could they grasp what kingdom was theirs in this little baby? When they had to flee for their lives and others were slaughtered, did they comprehend that this child would be slaughtered for the world and rise again so that those little ones, plus countless others who have hoped in him, would rise again forever? Theirs was the kingdom of God. The poor are blessed, not so much because they are poor, but because this too is their kingdom. Though the rulers of this age may shut them out by the iron doors of injustice, God does not shut them out but invites them in and makes them heirs of the true riches as they put their trust in him. *“For all things are yours...the world or life or death or the present or the future - all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” (1Cor. 3:21-23)*



Celebration Kids

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” Rev. 11:15

“...has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he promised to those who love him?” James 2:5

Loving with you this Christmas a King who rules the kingdoms of the world,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim + Raquel".

Jim and Raquel Bloom

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