

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 116.1-2, 11-19 [Worship]

1 I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. 2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

12 What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me? 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, 14 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones. 16 O LORD, I am your servant. I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds. 17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD. 18 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, 19 in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

Consider: Jim Douglass

[Think & Pray...]

"Preach as you go saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons" —Matthew 10:7-8

Jesus' commission to the 12, whom I take as representatives of us all, is in my case a rebuke.

While I have preached that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, I have never had the faith to heal the sick, raise the dead, or cleanse any lepers. Maybe the nearest I have come to casting out demons was to pray uninvited at nuclear weapons bunkers. But again my faith was smaller than a mustard seed. The bombs, and the demonic assumptions behind them, are still there.



Jesus' command that we simply live out our faith, with God doing miracles of healing and exorcism through us, is profoundly disturbing. Jesus says plainly at the heart of the gospels that a nonviolent transformation of reality through a living faith is possible. The reign of God is truly at hand—no farther away than my hand moving this pen, or your hand holding that page. Our faith and our hands equal the means to a new reality.

The best way I have found to bridge Jesus' vision of that reality and my own shallow faith is by Gandhi's "experiments in truth"—or better, "experiments in faith." The truth in question is the faith of the gospel.

One such experiment in faith was to join friends going to Iraq during the time of sanctions, taking medicines in the hope of saving a few lives and breaking an evil law. If our faith is deep enough, totally reliant on our Loving God, anything is possible—perhaps nothing that we want. Faith exceeds calculation.

Every experiment in faith is another go at realizing what Jesus said is true.

[The Scripture]

Romans 5.1-8

1 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. 6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 8 But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.