

THE OUTSIDER SYNDROME AND THE KINGDOM WELCOME



The Spirit's Victory courtesy of Melanie Havnauer prophetic art

Outsider Syndrome

If Satan can't con us into trying to be the center of the universe, making everything and everybody revolve around us; if he can't persuade us to try to be God...

.... then Satan comes in with a new ploy.

He tries to convince us that as far as God is concerned we're outsiders, and we're always going to be outsiders

... other people get their prayers answered

... other people get revelations from God,

... other people get glimpses of heaven,

... other people get power and grace and joy filling their hearts from God,

.... but our lot in life is to be outsiders....

"Yes, there was a time when I experienced some of those things too, but it didn't last. Now it seems that my lot in life is to stand in the cold and the dark on the outside and

look through the window while other people sit at the Father's table and are warmed by his cozy fire and blest by his joy."

This outsider syndrome is preventing many of us from becoming truly connected with what God is doing on the earth.

We pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..." but when God sends the kingdom and things begin to happen, for some strange reason, we just pull back and become wallflowers. We watch from a distance, because we somehow don't really believe that we could be part of it

"I'd like to, but I just can't. People don't realize how it really is with me. They think I fit in, but I really don't. Here I am, standing with my hymnal, singing the hymns and they think I belong here. But I feel like I'm from outer space ... I'm a foreigner... I'd really like to be part of what's going on but I'm not."

"Why do I feel like an outsider? Is it that God has shut his heart against me? Is it that people are looking at me as if I've got leprosy? Or, is it something inside me?"

Truly, the problem is not in God, and not in other people.

The cause of the problem, the source of this feeling that I have, is in me.

I'm sick. I've got this outsider syndrome and I have to be cured.

Before we can go out and boldly proclaim the gospel and tell people that Jesus died on that cross and rose from the grave and opened the doorway back into Paradise, and be able to say that with any kind of power, before we can go out into the streets and lanes of the city and its suburbs and compel people into the banquet table of the King and welcome them,

... We have to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that our days as outsiders are at an end.

... We have to know the welcome of the kingdom in our own hearts.

And Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare,

but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants." And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'"

Luke 15:11-24

How did this younger son become an outsider? Was it something the father did? Was it something the other brother did? Or, was it himself? Did the father walk into his bedroom one morning and say, "I've had enough of you! You're lazy! You're immoral! You're no good ... get out of the house!" No. The son decided to go.

"Give me my share of the inheritance. Let me have what I have coming to me."

The son decides he wants to live his own life, run his own show, be his own god. And so the father lets him have everything he asks for.... and out he goes. And as long as this younger son is able to convince himself that he's his own god, things are okay. He doesn't feel like an outsider, he's at the center of the universe ... everything's fine ... until his money runs out. When his money runs out he starts losing his friends too. With his money gone and his friends gone he begins at last to think once more about the father's house. But he thinks of the father's house as something really beyond his reach.

"I can't go back there. I've messed up too much. I've sinned too much. He's not going to welcome me back. I've sinned against heaven and before my father. I'm not even worthy to be called his son... I'm an outsider."



The Prodigal Son John Macallan Swan 1888 (public domain)

The younger brother remembers how things used to be. He used to have enough to eat. Suddenly it dawns on him that even the lowliest hired servant back home has a lot more than he does. And so he decides to go back, but as a hired servant.

"I'll hire myself to my father, and I'll still have more than I do now."

Notice he does not say, "I'm his son, I'm going to claim my rights. I know I spent the money but I'm still his son." None of that. He goes back as an outsider, satisfied simply to be a hired hand. But he swallows his pride and he swallows his shame and returns as an outsider. Now comes the surprise of his life...

"... While he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'"

.... this is my son! this is my son! and he's come home!



The Return of the Prodigal Son Rembrandt (public domain)

The father treats him like a son right away.

He welcomes him as his son, restores him as his son, honors him as his son.

And that's exactly what the Father wants to do with each of us.

The lesson from this younger son is:

Don't let your feeling of being an outsider keep you from coming back to the Father.

Never mind how much like an outsider you feel, come anyway ... just come.

Many of us feel so unworthy, so unclean and so "out of it" that we don't even have the heart to draw near.

But the message in this is:

Come anyway.... come and offer to be a hired servant.

Come confessing that you feel outside, unworthy, unclean, worthless and useless....

but come just come.

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.... just take me on, let me be your hired servant."

And what does the Father say? He turns to the angels and he says,

"Look who came home! My daughter! My son! Go get the best robe, the robe that was woven by the blood of my Son, Jesus. Get the ring, that gold that was fired in the furnace of his suffering. Go bring those shoes that he wore, they'll fit!"

And then he looks us in the eye and says,

"You're not an outsider, you're my daughter, you're my son ... you are my child!

And your sins are paid for by the blood of my Only Begotten ...

.... you're forgiven!

.... you're healed!

Bring on the music! Let's celebrate!"

"Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Luke 15:25-32

Here's a son who never left the father's home. Everything the father had was his. Still he felt like an outsider. He was convinced in his heart that his father didn't really love him.

"All these years I've served you, I never disobeyed your commands; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry

with my friends. But when this son of yours comes, (not "my brother"; "your son"), who devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf."

The father says to him,

"Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. You could have taken that fatted calf any time you wanted to. You need money ... your name is on the checkbook, write yourself a check it's all yours."

It was all his.

All the time it was his.

He belonged to this man... he belonged to the father.

And all the father's possessions belonged to this son, yet he felt like an outsider. Why?



The Kingdom Welcome

In order to live in the kingdom and to know that we're in the kingdom and to rejoice that we're in the kingdom, we have to carry in our hearts the kingdom welcome.

If this man had had a welcome in his heart for his brother, the father's love for him would have burned in his heart. But all the time the brother was gone, he didn't care. There was no welcome in his heart for his brother. The love of the father for this son, died not in the father's heart, but in his son's heart.... he was the one who was blocking it.

Those of us who have been in the Father's house for years and years and years, and still feel like outsiders, one thing we need to do:

..... we need to get that spirit of welcome in our hearts today.

Immediately they'll be singing and dancing in the Father's house for us.

We have already entered into a season of harvest which, I believe, will be the most abundant that we've ever seen. And we've been called to be part of it.... to go out with a word that is absolutely bold.

A word that will be confirmed by the hand of the Father with signs following...

... signs of mercy, signs of judgment, signs of hope, healings, blessings.

But before we can do this we have to be cured of this outsider sickness.

We have to know the kingdom welcome, and be ruled by that welcome in our attitude toward each other.

Just as Moses was cured of his outsider syndrome—at the burning bush after forty years in the wilderness of Midian as an outsider.... and just as Jonah was cured of his outsider syndrome in the belly of a fish after three days and three nights in a submarine grave, so you and I can be cured of this outsider syndrome, which is not in the Father, and not in the brothers and sisters, it's in us.

We can be cured of this thing today.

Come to the table of the Lord, come as the prodigal confessing our sin and our hardness of heart and our unbelief, our lack of welcome for other people.



We are all one in Jesus Christ

Published in For the Least of These: The Art of Soichi Watanabe

And then when the Son answers us,

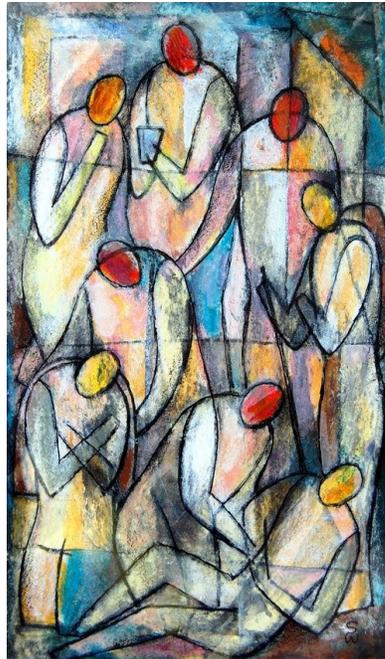
***“This is my body, given for you.
This is the blood of the new covenant shed for you, drink it...”***

... let's believe it.

And then let's welcome each other.

And then let's go out and welcome the lost ones.

And let's never think of ourselves as outsiders, ever again.



For the Least of These

Published in For the Least of These: The Art of Soichi Watanabe

Prayer

Dear loving, welcoming Father heal us from this outsider syndrome. We have sold ourselves on the lie that we are no longer connected to you, no longer worthy of you. We arise from our destitution. You are not beyond our reach. As we come back to you, our waiting Father, may we melt in your welcoming embrace and feel worthy of your exuberance at our return... “my dear child, my dear child, you are home and safe with me now.” And heal those of us who have not wandered off...yet still feel alone, still feel as outsiders. Heal us of our hard hearts, our faltering belief, our bitterness, our lack of love for the lost ones. May we be overjoyed as we sit at your table together... basking in your presence, experiencing and sharing your Kingdom welcome as loving brothers and sisters.

Maranatha Mirror Messages



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WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN