

ASSERTION: WHAT WE HAVE DOES NOT DETERMINE WHETHER WE HAVE THE KINGDOM. JAMES BEGINS BY ADDRESSING THE POOR: "LET THE LOWLY BROTHER BOAST IN HIS EXALTATION". THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR, THOSE WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN HUMBLE CIRCUMSTANCES OR A LOW POSITION CAN TAKE PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT A HIGH POSITION AWAITS THEM IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. WE USED TO SING AN OLD GOSPEL HYMN DOWN IN HAYNESVILLE, ALA.

THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME
I'M JUST A-PASSING THROUGH
MY TREASURERS ARE LAID UP
SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE BLUE
THE ANGELS BECKON ME FROM HEAVEN OPEN DOOR
AND I CAN'T FEEL AT HOME IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE.

THE WORD THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION TRANSLATE "BOAST" IS RENDERED "GLORY" IN THE KING JAMES VERSION, AND "BRAG" BY BARCLAY. THAT RAISES SOME QUESTIONS. ARE WE TO BOAST, OR BRAG OR GLORY IN THE FACT THAT WE ARE POOR? NOT AT ALL. THERE IS AN EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL SICKNESS THAT TAKES PRIDE IN POVERTY. AND THERE IS AN EVEN WORSE SICKNESS IN THE SOUL OF THOSE WHO WOULD TWIST SCRIPTURE TO FIT THEIR OWN STATION IN LIFE-ESPECIALLY TO CONDESCENDINGLY THINK THAT POOR PEOPLE SHOULD BE HAPPY WITH WHAT THEY HAVE.

THAT'S NOT WHAT JAMES IS SAYING. HE IS CALLING LOWLY CHRISTIAN THE POOR ~~TO~~ REJOICE IN THE FACT THAT THEIR LOWLY ESTATE IS TEMPORARY. WHAT WE HAVE DOES NOT DETERMINE WHETHER WE HAVE THE KINGDOM.

our ancestor

THE MARVELOUS SPIRITUALS THAT WERE SUNG AND CHERISHED BY SLAVES HAD THIS PERSPECTIVE. THOSE SONGS WERE SONGS OF REJOICING NOT IN SLAVERY, BUT IN THE FACT THAT THEIR STATUS IN LIFE WAS TEMPORARY. YOU REMEMBER "SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT HERE'S THE LAST VERSE OF THAT SPIRITUAL

I'M SOMETIMES UP I'M SOMETIMES DOWN,
COMING FOR TO CARRY ME HOME.
BUT STILL MY SOUL IS HEAVENWARD BOUND
COMING FOR TO CARRY ME HOME.

SOMETIMES THE CONDITIONS WERE SO TOUGH THEY PRAYED FOR THE CHANGE TO COME SOON -- "I WANT TO CROSS OVER INTO CAMPGROUND"

WELL, IT WAS NOT JUST THE SLAVES WHO RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE THAT WE CAN GLORY IN THE FACT THAT OUR LOWLY ESTATE IS SHORT LIVED. THE POOR WHITES IN RURAL ALA.. SANG OUT HOPE TOO. ~~ALMOST AS SOON AS I COULD TALK I WAS SINGING WITH THE REST~~ NOT ONLY "THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME," BUT ANOTHER JUST LIKE IT

way would sing. not over
WHEN WE ALL GET TO HEAVEN
WHAT A DAY OF REJOICING THAT WILL BE.
WHEN WE ALL SEE JESUS,
WE'LL SING AND SHOUT THE VICTORY.

GOD HAS INVITED ALL OF US TO THE RICHES OF THE KINGDOM. WE MAY BE PASSING THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES, WE MAY THINK THERE'S NO ESCAPE, BUT THERE'S GOING TO BE A "GREAT GETTING UP MORNING" AGAIN TO USE THE WORDS OF THE SPIRITUAL AND LOYAL SUBJECTS OF THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS WILL BE WELCOMED INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.. WE WILL HAVE POSITIONS AS EXALTED AS ANY OTHER.

JAMES IS TELLING US THAT EVEN THOUGH WE MAY BE POOR, WE CAN BE RICH—RICH IN THE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER—RICH IN THE KINGDOM SENSE. AND THAT DOESN'T MEAN ONLY THE INHERITANCE OF AN ETERNAL KINGDOM, THOUGH THAT'S THE FOCUS OF JAMES.

THERE ARE KINGDOM VALUES THAT CAN BE OURS, REGARDLESS OF OUR POSSESSIONS. ^{new}WHAT WE HAVE DOES NOT DETERMINE WHETHER WE HAVE THE KINGDOM.

SOME TIME AGO, A POIGNANT STORY APPEARED IN THE LOS ANGELES TIMES. IT TOLD OF A YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAD LEARNED THAT TRUTH IN HER HEAD BUT FAILED TO BELIEVE IT ENOUGH TO CARRY HER THROUGH HER DESPAIR. SHE GOT INTO HER MERCEDES 450-SL AND DROVE AWAY TO DIE. THE LIFE SHE CHOSE TO LEAVE WAS A LIFE MANY PEOPLE WOULD WOULD HAVE ENVIED. SHE WAS ATTRACTIVE, SUCCESSFUL, WEALTHY, BUT SHE CHOSE TO END A LIFE IN WHICH, SHE WROTE, SHE WAS "SO TIRED OF CLAPPING WITH ONE HAND"

IN A SPECIAL NOTE TO CLOSE FRIENDS, SHE SAID:"JUST DO ME A FAVOR SO THIS WON'T ALL BE FOR NOTHING. DON'T LET THE PURSUIT OF MONEY AND SUCCESS INTERFERE IN THE BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP YOU TWO HAVE. AS LONG AS YOU HAVE EACH OTHER AND A STRONG FAITH IN GOD, YOU'LL WANT FOR NOTHING ELSE"

SO JESUS' WORDS ABIDE, "DON'T STORE UP FOR YOURSELF TREASURES ON EARTH WHERE MOTH AND RUST CORRUPT AND THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL; INSTEAD, STORE UP FOR YOURSELF TREASURES IN HEAVEN... AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. SO YOU ALSO OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER "