



The Son of Man Has Nowhere to Lay His Head

An address for the Cosmic Mass ● 28th February 2010 ● Rev Grace

Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. And a scribe came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

Matthew 8:18-22

Just imagine.

Just imagine if you were the scribe.

You've just burst out with a statement that's totally going to change your life and what do you get in return?

A strange statement about wildlife and homelessness! A response that seems to have absolutely nothing to do with the commitment you've worked up to making.

These few images from Chapter 8 of the Gospel of Matthew must surely be some of the most puzzling in the whole New Testament – and not just for the scribe.

Let's put this strange interaction into context. At the start of the chapter Jesus has just come down from the mountain, on the way cleansing a leper of his vile disease through the power of his touch.

So he's come down out of that high state of spiritual consciousness, where he is free and at peace to be with the Father.

He's immediately confronted by the pain of the everyday lives people live. Here's a man with a ravaged body whom society has cast out.

But Jesus doesn't see the body, he experiences the depth of the leper's faith. He sees the life in the man driving him forward. These forces are powerful enough to make the leper whole.

Jesus and his disciples then come into Capernaum.

This city by the lake is a place where both consolation and conviction co-exist.

Capernaum isn't about the sort of comfort and conviction we're so used to. The sort where the thinking steps in to rationalise a painful experience and make it 'right'.

No, Capernaum is a place of inner conviction that doesn't need naming and can't be boxed into intellectual compartments. It comes from a place of 'beingness'. It arises from the I AM, not the ego or the intellect.

On arriving in that city Jesus heals the centurion's slave. Again, a healing in response to faith.

Jesus heals the slave from a distance through the life-giving force of his mind in response to the centurion's boundless and pure faith.

And then thirdly he heals Peter's mother-in-law, again through touch. And again in response to faith. Peter - Faith.

No wonder Jesus draws a crowd. And no wonder he wants the disciples to organise a boat so he can escape and go over the lake to the other side.

Now there comes the scribe, who immediately acknowledges Jesus as Teacher. *Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.*

What does Jesus hear in this man's words? What does he see when he looks into the soul of the man in front of him, proclaiming the words of commitment?

What does he read in the man's aura? Maybe he sees a man carried on a wave of emotion and committing himself with an enthusiasm that may not stand the test of time. Perhaps he sees a man who has finally reached this point of breaking through after lifetimes of denial. Maybe he looks into a heart that's been cleaved open and filled with love.

Whatever he sees, he chooses to paint the scribe a picture of what it means to be a genuine follower of the Christ.

And he chooses to do it in by the way of images. He chooses a way that by-passes the scribe's logical mind.

Foxes have holes, Jesus says ... Your astral nature and your ego will have to be transformed and cleansed.

Birds of the air have nests ... Your etheric body will need to be filled with the light of Christ and that leaves no space for anything that is of the old.

If you want to follow and be like the Son of Man *then you too will have nowhere to lay your head.*

If you want to be fully who you are, a fully divine, creative human being, you will need to move beyond everything you know, every assumption, every old certainty.

Can you imagine the scribe's experience?

Here he is – he's plucked up the courage to go against all that he's been taught and all that he's been responsible for teaching through his life's work as a scribe.

He's found himself responding to this man Jesus and he's put words to a commitment that will set him totally at odds with everything he's ever known.

He, who has worked alongside Israel's teachers, the Pharisees, has now recognised his true teacher.

Does he expect then automatically to be welcomed and enfolded into the community of followers of this strange man, Jesus?

We rarely hear of scribes in the bible without them being coupled with the Pharisees.

The scribes worked alongside the powerful sect of the Pharisees, who were in those times the ones steeped in religious education and teaching. They were bound by all the external 'shoulds and should nots' of their religion.

They were the ones who knew everything – everything that is but how to let in truth and life.

This truth stood before them in the person of Jesus – and all they wanted to do was destroy it because it did not fit their beliefs and dogmas.

We each have a scribe in us, patiently scribbling away. Most of us are no stranger to the Pharisee either, in some part of our lives or other.

Now a scribe is one who writes down what others say, or what others have written in books over the ages. So the scribe represents that part of us which takes on the thoughts and ideas of other, taking them into memory as if they are our own.

Every thought and word the scribe commits to memory, without discriminating between what is of the truth and what is purely astral. The scribe is like a sponge with no capacity for discernment when it comes to what he accepts or what he rejects.

Yet this scribe stands before Jesus, claiming he is ready to make a commitment ...

So somewhere along the line the truth, the life, has broken through. His soul has responded to the promise of new life.

But is it enough?

Foxes have holes, Jesus tells him.

Your astral, animal nature wants you to be comfortable, physically and emotionally so it finds a place of its own.

The astral nature wants to be certain you have a physical place in this world that you can claim and own and rely on. It wants somewhere that allows your ego to feel good.

It wants to hold on to a certain sense of self that it can fall back on whenever it needs a self-esteem boost, or when it needs to retreat from attack.

Your astral, animal nature wants to be safe. It's happy with its state of consciousness and the state of its soul.

The fox's hole is a place of darkness, a place of unconsciousness, where you may feel safe, but you're not in control of your life. The light of your mind can't shine when you're unconscious.

Birds of the air have nests. Your etheric body, the birds of the air, also wants somewhere it can create and call home.

It wants to continue calling on its memories and the patterns imprinted by them. Every idea absorbed from others without discriminating, or idea of its own stored in memory – these belong in the nest it's lovingly built and calls its own.

The etheric wants to stick with the habits and patterns developed over lifetimes.

It wants to follow the rhythms of the life it is accustomed to, rather than allowing in new ones that might feed and nourish it and bring new life. It doesn't want the power of a light-filled consciousness awakening to new truths.

Locked in its purpose-built nest, the etheric body is out in the light, but it may not open to the softening, the lightening, the freedom of Christ that is its real home.

But Jesus is talking directly to the scribe's soul, using the language of images, the language of the spirit. This language breaks through bringing light, creating the space for change.

Jesus paints the scribe a picture of the path that may lead him eventually to becoming perfected man, like the Son of Man who stands before him.

This Son of Man, this perfected man with his I AMness fully alive within him, dwells beyond the need to claim a home.

Jesus, the divine, fully alive, fully creative man, walked the earth and died for us so that we might one day be Sons of Men just like him. *This man Jesus the Christ has nowhere to lay his head.*

Nowhere to lay his head.

We see that in how Jesus literally lived his physical life during his three years of ministry.

He wandered from place to place, staying where he was welcome, shunning places and people who were not open to him. Many a night he and his disciples had nowhere but the rocks and the bare ground on which to lay their heads.

We see it in his every interaction, his every step on the way to the cross and the resurrection.

The man Jesus lived in a physical body with an astral body, an etheric body and an I AMness fully taken over by the Christ. One by one the Christ took full possession of each of these bodies, culminating on the cross.

An astral body yielded to Christ has overcome its animal nature. The emotions are disciplined, the thinking creative, spontaneous and filled with power and light. It has the freedom to respond without old expectations or emotional reactions. The traps of the ego have long been overcome.

Life simply becomes simpler, every moment.

The etheric body of the Son of Man is wide, open, soft and pliable, filled with light. It is way beyond belief and patterns of thinking. Its rhythms are its own, so the Son of Man has control over every breath, every heart beat, every pulse of blood around the body.

For such a one everywhere is home, and nowhere is home. Every moment is home because home is a place of just being.

Life simply becomes more colourful, every moment.

Time and the past have lost their power. The future holds no fear. To fear you need to remain caught in time, and such a one as the Son of Man is free from the net of time.

Is the scribe ready for such a journey? And does he know it will lead, inevitably, to the cross?

So Jesus, in responding to the scribe's desire to follow him, does not promise that it's an easy path.

What the scribe chooses Matthew doesn't tell us.

Perhaps, in any case, even wanting to know belongs to an old way of the logical mind working. To an old way of wanting clarity – to knowing the ending before we even start the journey. To knowing we have a place to lay our heads.

Such a paradox ... having to let go before we even know what it is we're letting go of.

The writer and mystic, Thomas Merton, described this state of 'wanting' as the basic paradox – the experience of twisting in torment on the axis of our own desires while God, the fulfilment of our desires, stands within us as an unnoticed gift freely given.

If only our astral and etherics could get the message that it's as simple as letting go! Or even that's it's as simple, and as demanding, as simplicity itself!

So shall it be

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