

A reflection by Rev. Stephen Kliewer

Rabbi Shimon said

“Each moment you are called upon to choose what you shall bring into the world.”

Joshua implored

“choose this day whom you will serve”

and those who seek to follow pray
thy kingdom come thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven

each moment we are called
to choose
the empire of this world
the empire of domination and oppression
of suppression and minimization for profit

or the kingdom of God

each moment we are called to choose
the way of domination or the way of service
the way of accumulation or the way of generosity
the way of welcome or the way of exclusion

we are told the outcome is inevitable
that at some point the oppressed will be free
that at some point the poor will be blessed with “enough”

we are told that hate will be conquered by love
and death overcome by life

at some point

it doesn't feel much like that now
as we watch empire beat a man to death
as we watch empire lie its way to power
as we watch those who have chosen the empire of the world
and have eroded their souls
until the divine spark
is more than blurred

it is hard to let go of the kingdom of the world
especially for those who enjoy and profit from it

it is hard not to respond to that kingdom, poorly
with retributive violence
with blame and fear-mongering
with detachment (run away, run away)

fight, flight, freeze
or perhaps fight, flight, blame (and shame)

and yet it is time
to choose
to choose this day
Love's creative future

The kingdom of heaven is near
Perhaps within us
We can (as Brian McLaren says it)
"Seek it, enter it, receive it,
live as citizens of it, invest in it, even sacrifice and suffer for it"
(Secret Message of Jesus)

and the choice we make
to live the Kingdom
can change everything

making the future heavenly
instead of hellish

each moment we get to choose
Will we live love?
Will we forgive?
Will we give?
Will we welcome?

Each moment the choice is ours
Which kingdom will we bring into the world?