

Daily Meditation 12/24/21

Christmas Eve, 2021: Eckhart on Our Birthing the Christ

Good morning.

This evening - er - this morning, we're meditating on Christmas Eve, the night before Christmas. And picking up on some of the ideas of yesterday's daily meditation from Meister Eckhart, I want to say a few more words about his teaching of how we are to birth the Christ.

In one sermon, he says, "What good is it to me if Mary gave birth to the Son of God, 1400 years ago, if I don't give birth to the Son of God in my own person, in my own time, in my own place, and my own culture?"

So, right there is an amazing question. And there's so much buried within it.

He is saying that we, too, give birth to the Word, to the Logos, to the Cosmic Christ, to the Christ, that the word Christ is much bigger than just Jesus. Jesus was an historical figure who lived about 30 years, and Mary gave birth to him.

But what he really sets loose, if you will, his preaching of the Kingdom, and of the coming of peace and justice and compassion, the coming of the Kingdom, in distinction from the Empire's values, these values that he's announcing, these are about more than him, these are about this bigger archetype, if you will, of the Christ.

So, in the Jewish tradition, creation is not something that happened once. They talk about continuous creation, creation is something that happens all the time. It's ongoing. It's an ongoing creation. That's really what Eckhart is tapping into here, that the Word of God is ongoing. It preceded the historical Jesus: the Logos, the Word of God, the Christ, was present at the beginning of creation, and all things are made through the Logos, according to this theology.

And so, it's not so surprising to say that Eckhart is calling us to give birth to the Word in our time, and that this Word represents the best in humanity, and our nearness to divinity. And in another sermon, Eckart says something parallel, but in different words. He says,

"What good is it if Mary is full of grace, and I am not also full of grace?"

Now, again, that is an invitation to our greatness, to our being grace-ful and full of grace. And in both of these sermons, he is taking Mary down from a pedestal, he's not putting Mary up on a pedestal. He's taking her down and saying, Look at Mary, what she did, we can do. What she did, we need to do.

And in that way, he's not committing hagiolatry, in the sense of putting her up on a pedestal, untouchable and so forth. Quite the opposite, that she is in this circle with us. She did what she did in her years on Earth, and it was very significant. And it was demanding, and painful, but also amazing and beautiful.

And this has to do with the first Christmas, if you will, but it also has to do with the death of Jesus on the cross, where she was present, and she outliving her son, which any parent who does that, outlive their children, know how painful without words, that kind of experience is.

But again, Eckhart is saying that we're called to be like Mary, not just honoring her, but that we give birth to the Christ, not unlike what she did. And we give birth to ourselves.

And we take in the grace of our existence and the grace of our relationships with others, and our work for justice and compassion in the world and in that context, we, too, birth the Christ.

So, a blessed Christmas Eve to you all!

Thank you, we'll see you tomorrow.