



SIEBENQUELL

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# When adventure comes knocking...

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Does it not sound simple? Someone knocks on our door and we consider whether we should open it and, if we do, whether to let the guest in.

Nonetheless, we are speaking about adventure here in the truest sense of the word. This adventure approaches us from the outside and breaks into our world; it is not a backpacking trip that we choose according to our own desires and possibilities; this not a guest whom we invited, nor an event for which we have carefully planned.

Is this »knocking« really as harmless as it seems?

In »The Hobbit« by J.R.R.Tolkien, there appears on one sunny and relaxed morning a wise wizard, Gandalf, before the door of the so well ordered, peaceful and predictable life of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins. He speaks the words: »I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it's very difficult to find anyone.« And Bilbo, who loves the orderliness of his life, immediately fends the idea off: »I should think so - in these parts! We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty, disturbing, uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner!« So, keep the door closed?!

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Jesus warns against this. In the Gospel of Luke, at the start of his long journey from the north of Galilee to Jerusalem, he will be addressed by two men who wish to follow him - he makes it clear to them, what this means. Then, however, Jesus addresses another: »Follow me! He answered: First let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him: Let the dead bury their dead; you, however, go and proclaim the Kingdom of God!« (Lk 9, 59-60) The call of Jesus to the fullness of life touches this young man, but he does not allow himself to be enticed, but prefers to remain under the order of his father - when he is no longer alive, then he will come, in other words, at some uncertain future date. Yet, then - and that is Jesus' warning - something will have died in him. Herein lies a profound danger in all of us. Jesus awakens life in us, calls us to a fulfilling of life with him, and we delay the response, return to our daily grind, die on the inside bit by bit, until we are the dead who deal with their dead, who merely administrate their lives, instead of living them.

The Bible is full of such stories, in which the call of God breaks into a daily life and demands an answer. Moses leaves behind the herds of his father-in-law, Gideon leaves the wine press, the disciples their nets, Levi his tax collector's table... they take a first step beyond the usual and the comfortable and into the adventure of their lives. The call of God reaches them in their hunger, that yearning for more life. Thereafter, nothing is as it was before. And nothing of the now unfolding growth and of the fullness of life in all its facets would develop, if the adventure, the call of God, had not come knocking.

That is precisely the reason why we human beings need adventures. Gandalf wishes Bilbo Baggins to accompany dwarves on a dangerous mission and declares to them: »There is a lot more in him than you guess, and a deal more than he has any idea of himself. You may (possibly) all live to thank me yet.« Indeed, Gandalf sees more in Bilbo than he sees in himself. Thus, through the adventure that breaks in upon us, God draws out more strength, more wisdom and more love from us than we deemed possible.

We often cannot escape the adventures that, suddenly and unbidden, challenge us. We then do not have the choice of opening the door to them or to quickly leave them standing before it. But we have the choice as to whether we perceive a misfortune that befalls us, in whatever form it takes, as an adventure that has come knocking. If we open ourselves to it interiorly, this becomes the first step in fashioning what lies before us. I remember a young woman whose mother became gravely ill within a short period of time was marked for death. The daughter entered into this totally altered world, repeatedly let the nurses in the hospital teach her important holds and skills, and then actively fashioned and formed the last days of her mother at home. In her heart, she did not remain in her »old« world, as it was still »in order« war, but allowed herself to enter into a new world, and I never forget her life-affirming radiance - so much power and perseverance, so much love was unfolding there.

When the adventure knocks, let us open and dare a first step - we may live to thank him yet!

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