



SIEBENQUELL

To acknowledge and esteem one another



SOURCE: BEN WHITE @ UNSPLASH.COM

Several days ago, a short film came to my attention, which had won the second prize at a Smartphone-Festival: »Today I acknowledge« is its title. The young filmmaker very simply addresses passersby at the Siegestor (Victory Arch) in Munich. They accept the invitation to say something acknowledging to one another. Thus, one woman acknowledges that her mother gave her an infinite love. In response, the elderly lady acknowledges with esteem what her daughter masters in her life. A young woman acknowledges the honesty and openness of her friend; a young man speaks of the great loyalty of his comrade.*

The respective couples look at each other and pause. The listener remains silent and considers what is heard. Both are always deeply touched and subsequently embrace each other, indeed, they relish this moment of acknowledgement. At the end, they confess to the viewer that they rarely or never have said these things to each other. Don't we know this all too well? Why don't we speak to each about such things? Is it because we are not conscious of it? Is it self-evident? Or are we shy, because it is awkward to become so personal?

Yet, at the same time, we all yearn for such acknowledgement and such words. This short film wonderfully demonstrates what happens when we are truly looked at and look at the other and when we explicitly acknowledge what we see and value in them. This also requires that we consider the right words and speak them. The yearning for this acknowledgement lays so deep within us, because we are created in love and for love.

This is all rooted in the wisdom of the biblical creation stories: God desires the human beings, he loves human beings, takes delight in them and gives their lives, meaning, value and dignity. Isaiah speaks thereof, that our names are written in the hand of God. Over and over it is God who looks toward his people. Sarah's slave, Hagar, who feels humiliated and worthless before her mistress and flees in the desert tired of life, experiences precisely this at a well. »The Lord has listened to your affliction«, says an angel to her and gives her a personal promise. Thereupon, she gives the Lord the name El-Roi – God looks upon me.

God loves and esteems human beings so much that he himself descends into their lives and supports them with us. »That is precisely the otherness and greatness of our faith«, said a young woman, who carries a heavy burden, to me recently; »we are not to pray to a distant God who is far from our lives. We have a suffering God, a compassionate God, who not only knows our pains, but suffers through them.« Thereby, she pushed back against that which is all too shallow, which often is also widespread in church circles. »Where is the esteem for that which is dark in my life if everything is quickly whitewashed?« It is of existential importance to her that God acknowledges and esteems the entire life of his people – this must not be watered down.

We Christians should let it be said to us: You are looked up with benevolence. You are loved with all that, which defines you. You are created with your dignity. This gives us the foundation upon which we stand.

The entire Magnificat tells us of the God who looks upon his people and esteems them. This releases a mighty praise in Mary, an appreciation of all the good the Lord has shown and continues to show his people

To allow ourselves to be looked upon and acknowledged leads to looking upon and acknowledging the other.

The people at the Victory Arch in Munich, at any rate, moved on visibly transformed.

* www.vimeo.com/215283613

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