



SIEBENQUELL

Of Chasms and Wellsprings

Living with Tensions



SOURCE: ROSEMARIE MONNERJAHN, MT. ARBEL 2014

Do you enjoy thrilling films or books? Certainly, most people will answer »Yes«, for after all, how boring is a story that simply trickles along, in which everything is clear from the start, in which the next step is predictable, the characters are simplistic and without mystery. By contrast, when we cannot predict the plot, when it is complicated and it is not possible to come to a simple verdict, when we are drawn into joy and suffering, in a tapestry of the burdensome and the beautiful, then our hearts follow along and we feel vibrantly connected. We need only consider the faces of people whom we have observed in such hours - as they scream, rejoice, weep or shiver!

Over a year ago, during our trip to Israel, we visited the place on the Jordan River, close to Jericho, where Jesus is presumed to have been baptized. From there he went to Galilee in the north of the country and we followed the same route, always along the small River Jordan up to the Sea of Galilee. Today we consider this region as contemplative, rather peaceful. Here things blossom and the land is green. No wonder that many travellers to Israel lavishly praise their visit to the sea and its surroundings.

The fact that Jesus began his public ministry here, spoke of the Kingdom of God and worked signs is often linked to this landscape: the kingdom of God means life, blossoming, and fruitfulness. Yet this region also speaks of another reality: it lays on geologically unstable ground; a chasm between the Eurasian and African plates runs through this earth and repeatedly causes shifts and quakes. They are also the reason for the opening of well-

springs. Furthermore, during the time of Jesus, this region was rife with pockets of resistance against the Romans - thus also politically and socially anything but nice and contemplative, but rather full of tensions.

Why does Jesus go to this region, call people, work miracles, and thus speak through word and deed of the coming kingdom of God? Because as people we, too, know inner chasms, deep cracks and ruptures in our lives. Because we often are broken by them or do not wish to acknowledge them. Because we resist or deny them. Jesus, however, speaks of God as the one who knows and carries all of this. He denies nothing of all this, yet he shows that water can well up from chasms, that ruptures can heal and that we can move over the cracks.

In this way we can stand within the tensions of our lives, move with them and even draw from them.

And we learn to sing as David once did:

»I hoped, yes, I hoped in the Lord; and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry. He drew me from the deadly pit, from the miry clay.
He set my feet upon rock, and made my footsteps firm.

He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God.
Many shall see and fear and shall trust in the Lord.

Happy are those who have placed their trust in the Lord
and have not gone over to the rebels, who follow false gods.
Countless are the wonders you have done and the plans you have for us; Lord, my God, nothing can compare with
you. If I would proclaim and speak of them, they are more than can be counted.« (Ps 40, 2-6)

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November 11, 2015, Vallendar