



SIEBENQUELL

»Fare thee well!«



How often is this wish in our hearts and on our lips when we say goodbye to loved ones or accompany them into a new phase of life. The transition into a new year is also a striking moment when this blessing is often pronounced. There is so much benevolence in it: may everything that happens to you be for your well-being! »To your well-bring!« my parents used to say to each other when they clinked glasses of wine. We wish and bestow upon each other that we might be well.

This blessing comes from the heart of God. His whole loving nature is intent on ensuring that His people are well. He says it to us and we should let it be said to us. Do we hear it?

Time and again, I observe in myself and others how quickly we harbour doubts as to whether God really wants the best for us. In view of the great hardships on our earth, when we personally have to endure difficult things, we are often no longer so sure. Perhaps we also hear voices from outside or deep within us asking whether this could be a punishment or at least a rebuke from God. We can lose ourselves in the question as to why. And of course this has consequences for the way we then endure life, and for the possibilities of shaping it.

Does it lead to passivity? Or do I start to take everything into my own hands, to make myself the master of my life - because who else is going to do it?

Does God really want my and our well-being? This question is existential and demands an answer. The Bible clearly says YES and the Gospel singers in the time of slavery in the United States stood on this foundation. In the eyes of their masters, they were inferior. They were socialised as Christians to keep them down. But they soaked up the message of the Bible. They became true hearers of the Word and learnt that the God of the Bible, our God, values them, loves them, wants their welfare. And they loved the prospect that he would come, that he would break into their lives, that they would one day experience a better day.

The song »In that great getting up morning« is a lively and stirring account of exactly that. For this hope could not be lost. That is why they held up the images of hope, sang about it in their church services and nurtured this faith and hope together, based on the experiences of Israel. Singing, they encouraged each other and taught their children and grandchildren. Yes, there will be a great morning of rising: »In that great getting up morning – fare thee well, fare thee well!«

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus speaks of events that will turn creation upside down and then says: »Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near«. (Luke 21:28). These words were a reason for vigilance and joy for the singers of the song. If the signs of the times speak of chaos and a reversal of the order of creation, then we need to be vigilant so that we can give a worthy welcome to the only One who is worth holding on to and who saves us.

For the slaves, the light of this story was the Son of Man, who showed them what a human being is capable of in the midst of a chaotic world. They sang of Him appearing while everything was falling apart and collapsing. He brings something into play that we did not expect. He brings something unpredictable, and this unpredictability opens up perspectives that the old rules did not provide. His »judgement« brings something completely new that we cannot give ourselves. Yes, we can allow ourselves to be gifted with what HE wants to give us. This can only happen if we orientate ourselves towards HIM, supported by the trust that God wants us well.

I am not closing my eyes to the catastrophic hardship throughout the world. However, I do not want to resign myself to dependency or fall prey to the delusion that we humans can cope with the "end of days" of our lives alone. I want to raise my head high to hear what the Son of Man is giving us. Only from this can new life grow. For God, who is love, wants our well-being.

On New Year's Day, this is promised to us anew in the reading:

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying,

Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them,

The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

So they shall put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.

(Numeri 6, 22-27)

Shalom!

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