

TFTD 23.9 Friday March 3rd



Matthew 7.1-13 Knocking on heaven's door

‘Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.

Bob Dylan's haunting song 'Knockin' on heaven's door'

was written during what the Americans call the Vietnam War. It expresses the despair of an American soldier who laments that he cannot wear this badge any more; he can't use these guns any more.

The refrain, 'knockin' on heaven's door', like all good song lyrics, can be understood at many levels. Is the singer talking about his expectation that his life may be close to its end? Is he at the point of giving up on his own life and ending it himself? Or maybe, it's got nothing to do with death. Maybe he is knocking on heaven's door demanding an answer. Maybe he wants the door to open onto a different world; a world of peace with justice where his pain and the death he sees all around him comes to an end.

Jesus tells us to knock on the door and it will be opened. What will be revealed when the door is opened? Well, says Jesus, if your child asks you for a fish you don't give him a snake, do you? If your child asks for bread, you don't give her a stone. So imagine what your heavenly father, who loves you, will give you if you ask.

For people of faith, knocking on heaven's door means demanding something better. And we demand something better in full expectation that what we will be given will be better; it will be what we need. We believe that the final act of the story has not yet begun. We don't know precisely what the final act will consist

of. But we do have faith that it will be better; we will receive what we need.

And this means we can look at what is happening around us with confidence that what we are looking at is not the final act. We may not even be close to the final act. What we are looking at when we look at the today is not how things will be like at the end. They are not how things are meant to be.

And to remind us of that, we can, in our prayers and in our lives, knock on heaven's door. We don't have to wear the badge we have been ordered to wear. We don't have to shoot the guns we have been given to shoot.

I wonder if they are singing this song in Bakhmut today? I wonder whether at the front today there are soldiers saying to themselves; this can't be right; I demand something better? I wonder if they are knocking on heaven's door?

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