

Nearly all the images Jesus uses to describe the kingdom of God are of something within, something inside, something hidden deep down.

In today's gospel he compares the kingdom to treasure buried in a field, a pearl of great price and to bringing up fish from deep in the sea. He also frequently uses the metaphor of a seed sown in the soil. At one point he explicitly says: "The kingdom of God is within you."

What Jesus *never* says is: 'The kingdom of God is outside you, it is all around you, it's out there.'

The Lord makes it clear, time and again, that the kingdom of God is an inward reality within each one of us. It is a greater reality – it is more real – than anything we experience 'out there'. Compared to the kingdom within us, the world outside is only relatively real.

The treasure hidden in a field, the pearl of great price, the fish deep in the sea, the kingdom of God itself, is not a place. It is a *vision*, a way of understanding life, and it is unitive. It doesn't see a hundred billion separate life forms; it sees the one Life *appearing* as a hundred billion forms.

The kingdom of God – as an insight, a revelation, a perspective, a deeper, more authentic way of seeing and understanding – refutes four fundamental lies by which we continually live.

1: The sense that I am the centre of my world. I am not. I am the tiniest, subatomic fragment of an inconceivably vast creation. I am of supreme importance – each one of us is – but I am the centre of nothing. I am a part of the whole.

2: A sense of linear time: the feeling that time passes by in a regular sequence. It does not. That is only what I *experience* from my restricted perspective. Einstein was one of the first to demonstrate that at a certain distance from the point of the observer, time has no meaning at all. St Therese of Lisieux said: “Time is a mirage, an illusion. Already God sees us in glory.”

3: A sense of separateness: the feeling that I am a self-contained unit of consciousness distinct and separate from all others. I am not – none of us are. The universe is indivisibly one. This is why Jesus taught: ‘Love others as you love yourself. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. Forgive others, that you yourself may find forgiveness. When you have done it to the least of my little ones, you have done it to me.’

4: A fear of death: the feeling that the death of the physical body ends all life for the individual. It does not. Life, consciousness, a sense of self-identity – as opposed to self-centredness – continues. It goes on, recognizably so.

The truth is that God is the centre and substance of the universe; that time as we experience it is but a virtual reality because life is eternal; that we are not separate and divided from everything else that exists but are essentially one with *all* life; and that death is as big an illusion as time and separation.

The physicist Darryl Reaney wrote:

“From hydrogen, the simplest of atoms, have come symphony orchestras, diamonds, the glimmer of dew on spider-webs at dawn, the underwater flight of dolphins, the sheen of mother-of-pearl inside seashells, voyager spacecraft, fractal images on computer screens, and the laser light of cognitive awareness. This is not a mechanical progression from simplicity to complexity; it is a creative act of unimaginable stupendous proportions. We – you and me – are the products of this evolutionary creative process. The universe is one in a way that we can hardly imagine. Our very bodies are made of exactly the same raw material as the most distant galaxies; they consist, if you like, of stardust.”

This is the vision of the kingdom of heaven; it is the treasure buried in the field of our soul, waiting to be discovered; it is the pearl of great price waiting to be found; It is the seed planted in the darkness of the soil

waiting to grow; it is the fish deep in the seas waiting to be caught in the nets of God.