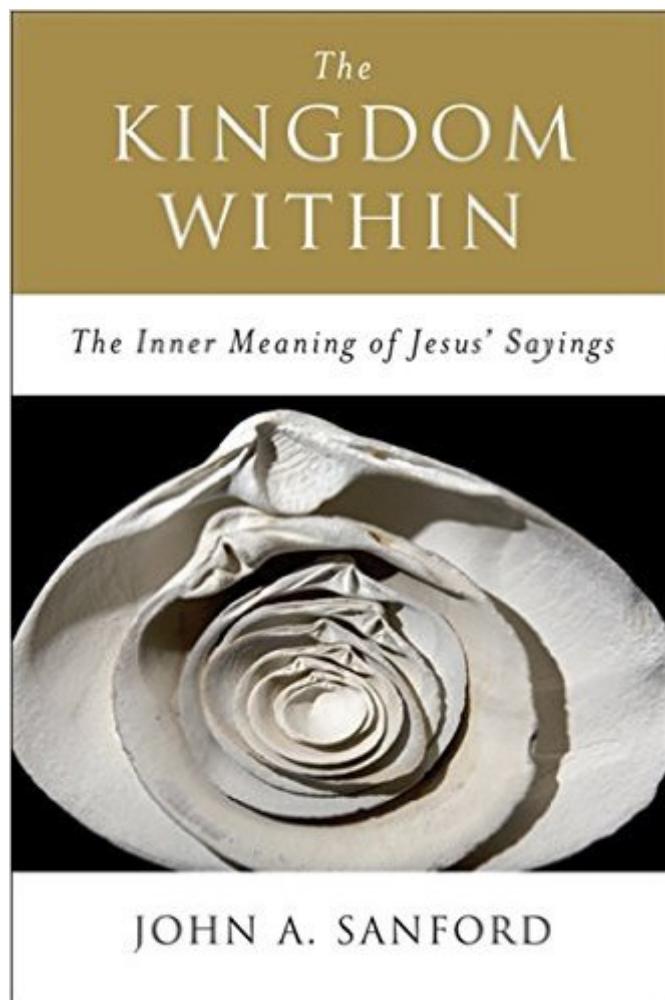


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The Kingdom Within: The Inner Meaning Of Jesus' Sayings



Synopsis

By showing how Jesus' teachings relate to our inner depths, this book guides us toward a more conscious and creative life. The Kingdom Within explores the significance of Jesus' teachings for our interior life -- that inner reality that Jesus called "the kingdom of God." It is Sanford's conviction that contemporary Christianity has overlooked this inner dimension of Jesus' teachings and so has lost touch with the human soul. Illustrated with case histories and dream material drawn from the author's work as a psychotherapist, The Kingdom Within examines such characteristics as extroversion and introversion, masculinity and femininity, thinking and feeling, and sensation and intuition to show how Jesus met the criteria of wholeness or fullness of personhood. Step by step, Sanford helps us to shed the outer mask, to eschew sin, which "means living in enslavement to what we don't know about ourselves," and to follow the road of consciousness, which leads to "a great treasure waiting only to be discovered."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Originally published in 1970, John A. Sanford's **THE KINGDOM WITHIN: THE INNER MEANING OF JESUS' SAYINGS** remains an outstanding example of how Jungian psychological theory and concepts can illuminate the paradoxical and oftentimes enigmatic teachings of Jesus. In spite of the popularity of the Jungian psychological perspective among many Christian circles (particularly in the Episcopal Church in which Sanford serves as an ordained priest), I wish to highlight several problematic dimensions of the Jungian perspective as employed by Sanford. (Please note: page

references in this review come from the 1970 edition published by Paulist Press.) Before highlighting problems, it is only fair to note that several strengths contribute to the book's abiding appeal. Sanford focuses on the kingdom of God as "an inner, spiritual reality" - a creative process of growth into wholeness rather than a static thing, place, or afterlife - that persons can begin to experience here and now (pp. 42, 46). In combination with insightful and sometimes novel interpretations of Jesus' parables, this focus on a here-and-now kingdom makes Jesus' teachings relevant for daily life. The hermeneutic possibilities opened up by Sanford's Jungian perspective challenge the narrow-mindedness of biblical literalism and the religious reductionism of scientific materialism. Sanford's Jungian approach also entails pastoral implications. It provides a religious framework for understanding how depression, spiritual stagnation, and neurosis may actually be signs of God at work in a person's life.

Embodiment of the divine, mirror to our lost selves - Jesus is the whole image of God's high design. He speaks to our human mind and heart - possibly reaching us half hiding, half longing. Jesus is the centered human, because that original image is intact. We, partially true, need a living image of the ideal self. The light shines within and from without - however, our own departure from the original self leaves us with a fractured being. Love is the only way - as selves do not exist alone, but only by being known and knowing, giving and receiving. We can see Jesus when we see ourselves, or vice versa. If only we have hearing ears - what a call Jesus makes. Sanford is an excellent revealer of the Son, the image of God become flesh. And does so in Jungian style. There is a whole me - if I look to Jesus, and really stop, sit, listen... my original self may feel a movement - being touched by the words of the Self incarnate. What is he saying - what will he say? I must be willing to risk, to listen with an intent to hear. This requires inner listening - thus 'the inner meaning of Jesus' saying'. The meaning is found inside a person - you and I. Christ exists in the true self - the honest self. What a call to liberty - few are able to walk out of the shadows and be empowered. I absolutely enjoyed this book 20 years ago, and will continue to. The message of Jesus here is that we can become whole human beings - Jesus being not just the model, but the compassionate encounter... for those who will make themselves knowable. I appreciate John A Sanford's book and have given to friends - one of the few Christian books on my shelf that has survived the many purgings.

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