

THE PRICE

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.” John 3: 16

Harry Potter isn't the only one named Potter when it comes to stories coming out of England. Beatrix Potter was an author of more than twenty stories, mostly about animals and the countryside, stories like *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.

After losing her fiancée to leukemia, she moved to a farm in the Lake District of England. She loved it, became a well-known sheep breeder, and married after a few years. In her opinion, the kingdom of God wouldn't look much different from her farm and the surrounding lands. But the times were hard for farmers. Her neighbors were in financial straits, being forced to sell their farms to developers who were going to build houses, perhaps even a town, and bring to an end the rural way of life that she loved.

That was not the world she wanted for herself or her neighbors, and so with the fortune she had amassed, both from book sales and family inheritance, she started purchasing these farms at auction. Then she allowed the farmers to stay on and run the farms, as opposed to having to move to the city in search of work. And she was more powerful than the businessmen bidding against her. Beatrix Potter had the money and the imagination to pay more than her foes. By the end of her life had had purchased 4,000 acres, or 15 farms, which she willed as a trust to the people of Great Britain for their enjoyment.

I see a parallel between what Beatrix Potter did and how God is bringing about God's rule, the kingdom of heaven. God knows the sort of world He wants for us. But God is battling against forces who have an interest in keeping things the way they are now, which is a world filled with violence, hatred, pain, suffering, and death. Not only is God at work to defeat these powers, but God is willing to pay the price to do so.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son (it was that costly) that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life,” that particular quality of life, both now and in the new world coming, based upon the teachings, example, and achievements of Jesus.

God is willing to pay the price to move matters toward the world he wants rather than the world some find acceptable. The Bible says that Almighty God shrank way, way down and was born a helpless baby. He grew up to be a healer, one who felt compassion for all in pain. He was rejected by his own people and crucified for our sake. It was costly.

A God who has suffered so much and paid such a price may not be the sort of God that popular culture believes in, but this is Our Father, the God revealed by the Bible, the God who is at work moving humankind toward the new world coming. We who join in the effort should not be surprised to find out that serving God's purpose is costly. Sacrifices have to be made. It's like the side that is willing to give the most of itself is the side that will win in this battle. – DJ