



The Bridge Church

The Day I Met The Queen (and what it showed me about the King of Kings) ... by James Galea.

Meeting the Queen of England was a moment in my life I will never forget.

Now when I say, I met the Queen, it wasn't a brief look or fleeting interaction. We had two meaningful conversations—conversations that I will cherish forever. And in each of these conversations I came away with, not only precious memories, but a deeper understanding and wonder of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.

Now whenever I tell anyone the story, the first question is 'why you?' I don't take it personally. I would ask the same thing of someone else. It's not everyday someone gets an opportunity to meet royalty, let alone the Queen herself.

Meeting the Queen

But here's what happened.

In 2006, when the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Australia for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, they needed a young person who was of Maltese background and I fitted the bill. I was asked to carry and present the Commonwealth Mace for a service at St Andrews Cathedral in Sydney, and then invited afterwards to attend an afternoon reception at Admiralty House.

And that was where I met the Queen.

I remember it so clearly. There were a lot of people, all in their very best clothes, and each had a name badge. On that badge, they would have their name and their title—like, 'former Prime Minister' or 'Chief of Police' or 'Governor General'. And then there was my name tag, 'James Galea', ... blank—no title, no rank, nothing.

The 'blankness' was highlighted even more when the Prime Minister (John Howard), who was introducing the Queen to people according to their titles, took a look at my badge and ushered the Queen on. But then she left the Prime Minister's side and began to walk towards me. I have never felt more scared and honoured all at once. She said 'hello' and we began to talk.

In that moment, [John 15:16](#)—'You did not choose me, but I chose you ...'—came alive for me. I felt like Israel when Moses said, 'the Lord did not set his affection on you and chose



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you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,' ([Deut 7:7](#)). There was nothing about me that Queen was drawn to. Nothing. I wasn't there because I had achieved anything great or shown power or talent. All I had was a blank name badge. And yet she chose to walk towards me.

Very few people have experienced something like this and yet millions have experienced something far greater. All Christians have had the King of kings walk towards them in love. And like me, there is nothing we have done, no title, no rank, just a blank badge that we carry. And yet God walked toward us by leaving heaven, taking on human flesh and dwelling amongst us in Jesus Christ. As Ephesians says, 'in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ,' (2:13). Why did the King of kings walk towards us? The same reason Queen Elizabeth walked towards me: he just wanted to. He wanted to show us a love and worth that had nothing to do with us and everything to do with him.

Later That Day...

But there was another conversation.

I didn't realise (because no one told me) that all those involved in the service were scheduled to have a formal introduction with the Queen. So we all lined up: the Rooty Hill Samoan singer Anthony Callea; Archbishop Peter Jensen, and me. It felt exactly like that Mr Bean episode where he meets the Queen (and I had planned to ask her whether she had seen it or not).

Now, we were instructed that you were not allowed to touch the Queen or even offer to shake her hand—she had to initiate everything. So I was a bit nervous as she made her way along the line. Then it was my turn, and three words I will never forget: 'I remember you,' she said.

Now I know we had talked only about an hour earlier, but the fact that she remembered me meant the world.

And then she sneezed. It was the most glorious, perfect sneeze I have ever seen and a bit of it went onto my hand. Though normally that would disgust me, this was the Queen (I did not wash my hand for a long time after that day).

As we talked (I was too nervous to ask about the Mr Bean episode), she began to thank me for carrying the mace that day. She was aware it was heavy and that I had taken the time



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out of my week to undertake this task. I found her 'thank you' so startling. Here she was, the Queen of England, thanking me. Little old me.

Another Monarch

This was the last time I ever spoke with the Queen, but you know it's not the last time I will have a conversation with royalty. For another king is coming. In fact, all Christians will come face to face with this King.

One day, all God's people will be lined up—all, I presume, with 'Mr Bean-like' ideas of what we will say to Jesus. And yet when the time comes, we will be startled: startled by the wonder, the beauty, the majesty and the power of Jesus Christ; and we will forget what we wanted to bring up.

But the most remarkable thing in that conversation will be, not only that we will be known, but that the King will be honouring the work we did for his kingdom. For Jesus knows what we have done; what we have given up, and will thank us when we meet him face to face ([1 Cor 4:5](#)). As it says in [Revelation 22:12](#):

Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

You may not have been thanked by Queen Elizabeth, but in following Jesus and living a life for him, there is a time when you will come face to face with the King and hear the words, 'well done good and faithful servant.'

Meeting the Queen was a rare occurrence, experienced by a few. But meeting the King of kings, is not. King Jesus chooses and remembers those with nothing to offer, and he welcomes them with open arms and honours. And one day, we will all be sharing our royalty stories of encountering him face to face in the new kingdom.

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