

Daily Reflection on Scripture Week of October 23



On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

John 2:1-11

This week's story from John 2:1-11 gives us a unique look into how early Christians understood hospitality. Of all the powerful stories of Jesus healing people and restoring sight to the blind we may wonder, why a story about Jesus attending a social occasion with his Mother and making the decision to let this be his first public display of miraculous power. But precisely because this is a story of a common community gathering there is much for us to learn about how Jesus saw hospitality. May God speak to you through this beautiful story of hospitality offered and received. May God continue to help us discover a faith that is deeper and stronger than just another belief.

If you would like to receive the Sacred Pause on your phone, text crossroads to 41411.

Sunday Oct. 23, 2016 2016

John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration.

Reflection: Weddings are common events in every society and they occur somewhere every day of the week. This one became special because something so important happened there that we are still writing and talking about it 2000 years later. Community was the center of life in Jesus' day and family and extended family were really important. The bride and groom must have been people who were close to Jesus, his family and his close friends because they were all there. This was an important event in their inner circle. As you read the story think about the love Jesus must have had for the people there that was great enough for him to come out of hiding and choose to display not just his power but the power of hospitality on this occasion.

Sacred Pause: Pause and breathe in the phrase "Everyone deserves..." and then exhale "...The gift of Jesus' unlimited welcome for all". Let this prayer guide you today.

Monday Oct. 24, 2016

1 Peter 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Reflection: Offering hospitality can be inconvenient. Moments of opportunity to offer "God's grace in its various forms" often arise spontaneously. We're caught off guard and not prepared to add them to our already overloaded schedules. The wedding story in this week's scripture is a perfect example. Jesus went with his family and friends to celebrate, relax, and enjoy fellowship at a festive occasion, but it turned into something

completely different. God offered an invitation to serve and Jesus responded, "Yes, I will do this thing." Opportunity comes to us the same way. God offers us opportunities daily but we always have a choice to seize the opportunity to offer grace-filled hospitality or to let the moment pass. There is no judgment here, just the fact that every day presents us with spiritual growth opportunities. Ask God to open your eyes to see these holy moments. How will you respond today to God's invitation? How does your faith go beyond just believing?

Sacred Pause: Look closely at the people you see today. Ask God to help you see each person as a sacred beloved child of God deserving your respect and concern. Breathe love.

Tuesday Oct. 25, 2016

Exodus 22:21 You must not mistreat or oppress foreigners in any way. Remember, you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

Reflection: In this verse God is speaking to the Israelites reminding them that they were once strangers, immigrants, servants, even slaves in Egypt. They were the outsiders and it was difficult. God reminded them that they should go out of their way to be kind to people from other lands. Our community is filled with people from all around the world. God's desire is for us to extend ourselves, our hospitality and our grace in loving kindness remembering that it is difficult to be in a strange land and far from home. Reflect on the fact that each person you meet who is from another country has rich cultural heritage to share with you. Can you extend yourself beyond your comfort zone to take a step toward someone who comes from far away, establishing a relationship with an open, listening heart?

Sacred Pause: Pause for a breath prayer, Inhale... "Everyone deserves..." hold for a few seconds then exhale the words ... "To be served as a friend or brother or sister".

Wednesday Oct. 26, 2016

John 2:3-5 When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They don't have any wine." Jesus replied, "Woman what does that have to do with me? My time hasn't come."

Reflection: One simple but humorous way to interpret this scripture is simply, do what your mother tells you to do. But, the more important point here is that God is always presenting us with invitations to action. This one came to Jesus from his own mother. Jesus had a plan for his own time, and his own way of revealing his healing power. This wasn't it. Like Jesus, we don't get to choose the many situations we encounter, but we do get to choose how we respond. Life brings many unexpected situations into our lives, and it is challenging to try to respond to each one in the way of Jesus, or see them as spiritual situations. Can you see your whole life as one ongoing opportunity to respond to God's invitations to action and reflection, both for self and others?

Sacred Pause: Whatever challenges you experience today, remember that God is with you...as close as your breath, ever ready to help you find godly wisdom in your situation.

Thursday Oct. 27, 2016

Hebrews 13:2 Don't neglect to open up your homes to strangers, because by doing this some have been hosts to angels without knowing it.

Reflection: This scripture reminds us that God invites us to share hospitality equally to everyone, strangers especially. The scripture goes on to say that by doing this some have entertained angels without realizing it. The Bible speaks of "angels" - special sacred beings throughout. Truthfully we have no idea who these beings are except that they are messengers from God. What is important for us to understand is that all people are sacred and can be our own messengers from God. Just as Jesus' mother was the catalyst for Jesus' first miracle, anyone we encounter can be the one who prompts us to step up and take action to make God's kingdom a reality here on earth. We should treat all people, stranger or not, as messengers from God. How might you see the people you interact with today as messengers of insight about yourself or the other from God?

Sacred Pause: How might you open your mind heart and hands to someone you might call a stranger? Be willing to learn something about yourself and the “stranger” as you do so.

Friday Oct. 28, 2016

John 2:5-7 His mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Nearby were six stone water jars used for the Jewish cleansing ritual, each able to hold about twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water,” and they filled them to the brim.

Reflection: This part of the story teaches us the beautiful lesson that miracles can come from the most ordinary things. In fact, all of Jesus’ healings and miraculous actions involved ordinary things. He used what was already there at hand, simple jars not even meant for the purpose of holding wine, and just plain water. Yet, these simple, everyday objects became the centerpiece of Jesus’ first public miracle. Each one of us has simple, everyday objects and opportunities available to us that have the potential to be someone else’s miracle. A ride when your car breaks down, emergency babysitting when a crisis occurs, a few dollars loaned when someone is short of cash. Or as simple as a kind word spoken to someone in need. These can all be everyday miracles and seen as impactful as Jesus providing more wine when the host ran out. Remember Jesus told us that as his followers we will do things even greater than he did. What do you have available to you that might become someone else’s miracle? This is what it means to have faith beyond belief.

Sacred Pause: Stop and think of a time when you needed help and help came to you. Can you see how God was providing a helping miracle for you in that moment? Pass it on.

Saturday Oct. 29, 2016

John 2:11 This was the first miraculous sign that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection: We know Jesus had devoted followers but something special happened to them at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. They saw something and they experienced something that they could not understand. Talk about faith beyond belief! It affected them so profoundly that the scripture says “they believed in him”. Their faith led them to believing that he was so much more than just a kind guest who went out and bought more wine for the party. They saw him offer a radical and therein miraculous hospitality that was full of God’s miraculous compassion for the people. The hospitality of Jesus is God’s unlimited welcome that goes deep and wide and long. It is God’s welcome into a new way of seeing and living. What would have to change in your life for you to begin offering radical and miraculous hospitality?

Sacred Pause: This week, where and when did you give or receive hospitality? How did that experience feel? Thank God for the opportunity to give and receive hospitality.