

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2: 1-11

**Do We Have Enough?**

Reader 1: I was just minding my business, sitting out in my car in front of the grocery store, waiting for my spouse to finish the shopping. It had been raining, you know drizzly and spitting showers. The clouds were dark in most of the sky. I looked to my right and got a surprise. Here, in the middle of winter, a rainbow. The light of the sun broke through and showed a rainbow as clear as can be. You have no idea how that made me feel. I'm not a wintry person, but I wasn't feeling particularly joyful... somehow the surprise of that rainbow lightened my spirits. God or not God... just an atmospheric phenomenon?... I don't know... but somehow it made me feel a bit brighter and happier.

Reader 2: The ground here is slushy, some of the snow has melted with a January thaw. But it's not pretty... it's muddy and slushy... everything is muddy and slushy. It tracks in everywhere, leaving watery and dirty patches on floor and rugs. Yuck! Where is the pristine whiteness of my beautiful winter scenery? Why is all so muddy and slushy? And as I looked in disgust at the mud and slush, I thought about the mud and slush that I have allowed in my life. I have opened rooms in my spirit for sadness, frustration, pettiness, prejudice, bitterness, envy, greed. I put up, "Come on in and join the party" signs.

They came in. But it wasn't a party - unless you call it a "pity party"... me feeling sorry for myself... dancing or slogging around in my own mud and slush. I'm not sure how it happened, if it was the reference to Jesus at the wedding in Cana, when he surprised the guests by his gracious transformational gift of turning water into wine; but Jesus has turned my whining spirit into dancing and thankfulness. I have spent too much time in my pity rooms, I needed to go outside my fears into the Light of Joy! Well, here I am. And it's good!!!!

Reader 3: Do this, do that... keep moving. I need this, I need that... always bend to the needs of others. You don't need time to yourself, that's just being selfish, they said. What you need to do is to forget about yourself. Immerse yourself in work... work... work. Well. I have. I have lost myself. I have hidden myself away in pitiful caring... which means, that I am caring without really caring. I am going through

the motions. I don't know how to stop and ask for help anymore. God is somewhere, but not here. Nowhere, that's where I am. And it looks like that's where I'll stay. I need something. I need joy! But Joy can't just be manufactured. Not all the stuff in the world will create joy. Someone said that it comes from within. In that case, I'm in trouble, because the only thing inside me right now is emptiness and loneliness. Where is God? Where is that source of Light and Joy that the preacher keeps talking about? Where is God in my life? I look within. What can I do? What do I do? I try to help. I work with older people, helping to make them more comfortable. I work with small children, teaching them to take care of each other. I work with my family, as a caregiver, parent, friend. I work, work, work...is that what God would have me do? Work? Where is the joy...is it in the face of that elderly lady who just needed someone to talk with for a few minutes? Is it in the joy of the children who are learning to play nicely with each other. Is it in my family, who are safe and warm. Is it in me? Is God's light of Joy in me? Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are feeling burdened. Let me take your burdens and carry them. I will give you release and relief from them. Rest in my love, and I will strengthen and sustain you". Lord Jesus, lift me gently. Open my spirit again to your joy. Breathe into me the breath of new hope and joy.<sup>1</sup>

"They have no wine."

I hear a question in Mary's voice as she points out to her son Jesus that the wedding guests have run out of wine. I hear a question that I carry deep within myself, a question familiar to many of us: Will I have enough? Are we running out? Are we rich enough? Safe enough? Good enough? Will we go over the budget? Can we put dinner on the table...?

It's a question of scarcity I hear in Mary's voice, and Jesus answers it, as he always does, with abundance.

This story is one of the fourth gospel's so-called "sign" stories, one of the ways John presents Jesus as one who offers abundance. Jesus, as the one who embodies God, who shows us God, is one who shows us abundance. John's story about the wedding feast at Cana is a story about the discovery of true abundance.

Abundance. How much is enough? This is a critical question, not only as we might look at our own checkbooks, but as we make our way in our world and in our Christian faith. The question of abundance is an economic question, the question of quantity, one that demands the calculations of dollars and barrels and percentage points.

Now, the expected Christian response to the calculations about amounts could be that abundance, real abundance, ought rather to be measured in terms of quality,

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/3501/worship-connection-january-20-2019>

not quantity, that the good life, the life of salvation--that is, the life lived with God--is a life that cannot be measured in mere numbers.”<sup>2</sup>

But that's not entirely true, and the one of my former professors and theologians asks us to look again at the question of abundance. Sallie McFague says that if we are to be faithful followers of Jesus, if we care anything at all about the spiritual life, the good life, the life lived in and with God, we need to get out our calculators and take a look at what abundance means in our world today.

“In her book *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril*, McFague makes the case for a theology of a different kind of good life. The Christian good life, she says, is marked by sustainability, self-limitation and inclusion of all, “especially the weak and vulnerable.”

She writes: "I believe Christian discipleship for 21<sup>st</sup> century North American Christians means 'cruciform living,' an alternative notion of the abundant life...For us privileged Christians a 'cross-shaped' life will not be primarily what Christ does for us, but what we can do for others. We do not need so much to accept Christ's sacrifice for our sins as we need to repent of a major sin--our silent complicity in the impoverishment of others and the degradation of the planet." (p. 14)

“This is radical stuff. Living this cruciform life is not about easing into a comfortable relationship with a benign God. It's not about a private peace or a personal path to enlightenment. But it is about the critical connection between the personal and the political. The cruciform life means that we live out the love of God in every choice we make, choices about food and clothes and cars and recreation and water and heat and light.

These choices are about numbers. They are economic. They are also spiritual. It is God's intention, as we see in the life of Jesus--the one who turned water into wine, the one who sat down to table with all the wrong people--it is God's intention that all life should flourish. And so our task is to tend to this flourishing in the place that God dwells, that is, our earth, our world.”<sup>3</sup>

McFague wants us to practice “enoughness.” She suggests we limit our consumption of the world's resources in recognition of the needs of others. Bear with me for a moment as I explain what Sally means by this.

McFague suggests “If we see ourselves living in an interconnected global village, the rules of God's house are the rules of housemates. Housemates, operating by an ecological economic model, abide by basic house rules: "Take only your share, clean up after yourselves and keep the house in good repair for future occupants." (p.122)

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://day1.org/1679-finding\\_wild\\_space](http://day1.org/1679-finding_wild_space)

<sup>3</sup> IBID

It's not easy to jump on board and start living with such house rules. Getting there asks of us nothing less than transformation. The key to this transformation is our third rule, our "wild space."

Wild space is that part in each one of us that does not fit our consumer culture's definition of the good life. Here's how it works: Imagine a circle. Within that circle is the dominant cultural model: white, male, middle-class, heterosexual, educated, able-bodied, Western, successful. Now, put your own model of yourself over that circle. Some parts may fit, maybe almost all, some may be different. The part of us that falls outside the conventional circle is our wild space. The parts that do not fit may be obvious: race or sex or physical characteristic. Other parts that do not match up with the successful conventional model may not be so obvious to others: surviving the death of a loved one, a lost job, the struggle with addiction or depression, the vague disappointment about not "making it," or our refusal to buy into the conventional model. Anything that causes us to question the definition of success is our wild space.

Wild space is our window of opportunity to see a different vision of the good life. Being a Christian, McFague says, means having a wild space. This different vision is counter-cultural. It is based in the radical, generous, abundant love of God and God's desire for abundant life for all. It's the vision of John, telling that story about the good wine at the wedding in Cana. It's a vision that starts with a recognition of need, of emptiness.

It was that wild space in Jesus that allowed him to pose an alternative to the status quo of his day. It was that wild space that allowed him to say that everybody, really everybody, is welcome at the banquet table. It was that wild space that set him apart as a wisdom teacher, offering the beatitudes as a new way of living. It was that wild space that allowed him to say that the meek are blessed, along with the poor and the mourning. It was that counter-cultural wild space in Jesus that cost him his life and that gives us ours. It was the wild space that Martin Luther King Junior discovered that allowed him to question the status quo and gave him the freedom to pursue the same radical vision of love and justice that led him, like Jesus, to the cross.

It's the wild space in each of us that allows us to question the patterns of our lives so that we might begin to break free of the conventions, addictions, protections and consumptions leave us feeling filled to the brim but empty deep inside, that keep us from recognizing our deepest need and the deep hunger all around us. It is our wild space that allows us to question the consumer model of abundance and imagine alternative ways to use the earth's resources. It is the wild space in each of us that allows us to question the patterns of our lives so that we might begin to live in such a way that cares for our planet and our neighbours.

Review of how the first readings impacted me and how we choose Joy, abundance and enoughness.

That is the key of the message of Jesus today. His message is to believe you have enough. This year I want to challenge us as individuals and church to live into our enoughness. Now by that I don't mean settle and let everything go but that I mean live out of the celebration of what we have, open our eyes to see it, remember who we are (remember last week - you are loved and beloved), **DO NOT BE AFRAID**. Even on a dreary rainy day such as this what is our abundance? Open your spirit to new joy as you do even on I day like today you will imagine rainbows, even on a day like today you will feel less tired, less stress, less worried. God is with us. We have enough, we are enough, together God and I we've got this.

May we know that deeply and live into it fully through the knowledge of God's Amazing Grace.

Let's sing.