



Daily Meditations March 11-16, 2019

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 1 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Judy Aronow, Pat Gillory, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T. Cay Rowe, Lisa Wilkinson, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT Lent 1:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Reconciling Two Natures

Monday, March 11, 2019

John 2:1-12

"Woman, why do you involve me?...My hour has not yet come."

In Jesus time, as now, the wedding feast is one of the major celebrations of life. Today most of the festivities occur in one day; Jewish celebrations lasted several days and the whole community participated. Friends and family gathered, special food and wine was prepared, festive clothing was worn, music and dancing prevailed, and a wonderful time was had by all to celebrate this start of a new family.

In this story, Jesus' whole family came to the party--his mother and brother and maybe sisters, although they are not mentioned. It is one of the most intimate pictures we have of Jesus' family life, but we also have an insight into Jesus grappling with his destiny.

Like a true Jewish mother, Mary wants all to be "right." When she notices the wine is depleted early, she mentions it to Jesus. Probably not yet clear about what the future holds, he tells her it is not his affair as his time has not yet come. Mary, wise mother that she is, does not argue, but turns to the servants and instructs them to do whatever he asks.

We don't know what went through Jesus' mind, but he followed his mother's suggestion and turned six jars of water standing nearby into wine and directs that they be taken to the master of the banquet. Not knowing what had

transpired, the master complimented the bridegroom on saving the finest wine until last.

What Jesus did at Cana was the first event that revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him. I have a hard time handling the complexity of human nature. Jesus had to reconcile two natures--human and divine. This, to me, is as much a miracle as turning water into wine.

Three Days

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

John 2:13-20

"After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said."

When two people hear identical words, they do not always get the same message. There is a good example in this passage.

After Jesus had cleared the Temple of people selling animals for sacrifice, money changers, sellers, and others desecrating the Temple with commerce, the Jews asked him, "By what authority do you do this?" His answer, "Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews responded in astonishment, "How can you build in three days what it took us 46 years to erect?"

They were not speaking of the same realm. The Jews were thinking of stones and doors. The Temple Jesus referred to was his own body.

When Jesus was resurrected three days after the crucifixion, the disciples remembered his words, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said. When Jesus spoke to them, they did not understand. In retrospect and with proof, they believed. Sometimes it is the same with us.

One Foot Two Worlds

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

John 2:23-3:15

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

I have a lot of sympathy for Nicodemus because I know just how he feels. He was a Pharisee of high estate and well regarded. He had been born and educated and trained in a world of logic and proof and found it difficult to accept any ideas that could not be demonstrated or proven.

That sounds very much like the world into which I was born and live. It took me 50 years to realize I was not a one-legged stork but a two-legged human with one foot in each of two worlds--the world of flesh and the world of spirit.

It is hard to jump from one world to another but even harder to live with one foot in each world, to decide which one is real. Frankly, I vacillate, but I am finding that the spirit world feels more and more like home. I'm not sure what that means, but it feels true.

Rebirth in the flesh is not possible, but rebirth in the spirit is a blessing to pray for and to honor. I hope Nicodemus finally figured it out.

Love of Light

Thursday, March 14, 2019

John 3:16-21

Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

I had to chuckle when I read this passage because it reminded me of myself and my overwhelming preference of light over darkness. Any of my friends will tell you that after three cloudy days, I turn into a grizzly bear. Like an overwatered plant, I turn gray and droopy.

For me it has always been this way, and I never associated it with good and evil or candor and deception. When I look at it from John's position, I can see his point. One can hide or distort the truth in darkness, but it is not so in bright light.

I have never associated my love of light with goodness or pure intention. I always thought it was genetic or chemical because it felt so basic to me. Do not hear me saying, "I must be a good girl because I always choose light over dark." I think one idea can hold more than one truth.

If I find myself seeking a dark corner, I should hear loud alarms ringing to remind me to examine my motives very carefully. That probably is a good approach for any of us.

Straight Shooting Faith

Friday, March 15, 2019

John 3:22-36

"For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God..."

When one person speaks to another, more than two actors or factors are involved. We have the speaker, the hearer, the character and reputation of both, the story itself, and the repercussions.

God sent Jesus to us to tell us the Truth and to offer us Life. When we hear Jesus' message, we hear God's words spoken to us by Jesus. We then have two choices. We can believe them or reject them. The choice is free; there is no pressure or compulsion, but the results of that free choice are enormous.

Until I read this passage this time, it had never occurred to me that my choice involved anyone but me. John says that whoever accepts Jesus' testimony certifies that God is truthful. Once you see it, it seems pretty obvious, but to me it was a new and powerful concept.

Calling God a liar is blasphemy, but I never realized that refusing Jesus' words was just that. John was a straight shooter. There was no ego competition between him and Jesus. May our faith and loyalty be as strong as his.

Well Water or Living Water?

Saturday, March 16, 2019

John 4:1-26

"Sir, you have nothing to draw with and this well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"

Water has a very simple chemical formula--H₂O. Two ordinary elements: hydrogen and oxygen and a straightforward ratio of 2:1. Sounds rather ordinary, yet it is absolutely essential to sustain physical life.

When Jesus was on his way back to Galilee, he stopped around noon to rest while the disciples had gone to town to buy food. A Samaritan woman and her flock approached Jacob's well where Jesus sat. Hot and thirsty, Jesus asks her if she would give him a drink of water. Surprised, as Jews did not mix with Samaritans, she asked him why he asked her for water.

"If you knew who it is that asks you, you would ask him for water, and he will give it to you."

"Are you wiser than our ancestor, Joseph and Jacob?" she asked.

"He who drinks this water will thirst again, but he who drinks my water will be filled with a living spring that leads to eternal life and will never thirst again."

She did not understand, like so many of us, but the choice was real. *Which do you choose? Well water or living water that supports eternal life?* Good question, but not an easy one to answer.

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