

the  Venues
Go Deep
A Very Covid Christmas
A Better World
11.29.2020

This week we asked ourselves what role we should play in partnering with God to bring about a better world. We looked at the words of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, who encouraged us to see our faith journey as one that calls us to think about how we take an “ordinary” life and etch it with holiness each day. We read from the prophets, who remind us that we supposed to walk in the ways of God. We also read the story of Jesus turning water into wine and examined how that story may encourage us to take ordinary things in our life and use them to live a life that is divinely inspired.

Here are some follow-up questions and thoughts for our “Go Deep” notes this week:

- (1) In the miracle of water made to wine, described in the second Chapter of John, Jesus tells the master that the best wine was served last. Why does Jesus say this? Why is it important enough to record? Is there a point he is making?
- (2) Why do so many of the miracles and teachings of Jesus recorded in the gospels involve food? (Think of fish/loaves, wine at the wedding, The Last Supper.) Is it just coincidence or is there a lesson in those settings for us?
- (3) Have you heard of the abundance/scarcity mentality discussed by Steven Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*? Covey describes abundance mentality as one where people feel there is enough to share with everyone. A scarcity mentality, Covey describes, is one where we feel the need to collect, store and keep for ourselves. How do the miracles like wine at the wedding or fish/loaves among the crowd of thousands encourage us to adopt an abundance mentality?
- (4) In Chapter 22, 15-16, of Jeremiah, the prophet writes:

*“Does it make you a king
to have more and more cedar?
Did not your father have food and drink?
He did what was right and just,
so all went well with him.
He defended the cause of the poor and needy,
and so all went well.
Is that not what it means to know me?”
declares the Lord.*

- Does this passage influence how you think about what it means to “know God”? If so, how so?

- (5) Has Christianity elevated “belief” in Jesus/God over the “practice” of living as a Christian? Has Christianity become a faith emphasizing “right belief” over “right practice”? How do you feel about that? Paul does tell us that we are saved by faith. But don’t the teachings of Jesus emphasize how we live out that faith? How do we reconcile the two?

What does this statement of Rabbi Sacks mean to you: “Take an ordinary life in ordinary circumstances and make that a home for the divine presence.” How can you commit to doing that today? This week?