



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

January 17, 2010
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Nathan Wilson

RCL: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11
LM: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11;
John 2:1-11

God's generosity is amazing and incredible. Isaiah 62 is bursting at the seams to shout from on high that Jerusalem's vindication is at hand and to announce the land's new names. As a young man delights in and marries a young woman, screams this text, so God delights in Jerusalem and shows her off to all the nations. Indeed, says the prophet, God will deliver on the complete promise of salvation.

The psalmist sings of God's generosity as God's steadfast love, which the people especially need in times of threat and opposition. The passage completes the text from Isaiah, meditating on how reliable God's love is, a love that is present in the here and now. The passage from 1 Corinthians reminds readers of the Spirit's generous gifts, which lead first to confessing Jesus as Lord and then to various ways of serving the Church. Today, as apparently was true in first-century Corinth, people of faith need to have spiritual gifts explained to them. Whereas Corinthians were likely to allow mindsets of past pagan religious experience to affect their understanding, we are tempted to reduce our understanding of spiritual gifts to simply talents we have at birth or skills we acquire later.

And finally in John's text, Jesus answers the crisis of a depleted wine supply at a wedding, exceeding what the host originally supplied both in quantity and quality. John's explanation in verse 11 is crucial: what Jesus does is a "sign" revealing his glory, and then his disciples believe in him. Believing in the particulars of the miracle is irrelevant; rather, John's point is sharing the disciples' deepening faith in Jesus.

The question, of course, is what difference God's generosity makes. More to the point, what difference does it make in our lives as people of faith and as advocates for justice? Does it, for instance, inspire us to deeper concern for that which concerns God or does it merely evoke from us an anemic "thanks" as we continue along the way of our busy lives?



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Our world has seen tremendous advancements, yet unforgettable devastation still plagues us. We have found cures for diseases, yet weapons threaten our lives. Material resources abound, yet children starve.

Now more than ever our challenge is to till and care for all creation so that all may enjoy the continued gifts of God's generosity, including the gifts of food and shelter. People of faith have a great responsibility and a great opportunity. Will we take the path of proclaiming God's generosity and working for justice? Or will the path of narcissism and materialism be our response to God?

Children's Time [Marc Miller]

Following this thread of God's generosity, get a bag of M & M's or perhaps wrapped candy for today's message. Tell the children that this is how the world works: give ten pieces of candy to one child, who is a "rich child." Then give two or one to other children—this is their pay for their work. Then tell other children that they get none at all—they are the hungry in our country and in every nation. Tell them soberly that this is the way of the world. Then say, "But this is God's way," and pour the whole bag over them! As they scramble for the candy, help them understand that God's generosity is bountiful and universal!

Musical Suggestions

One Bread, One Body—*Chalice Hymnal* 393

Additional Suggestions [Larry Hollar]

How Like a Gentle Spirit—*The United Methodist Hymnal* 115

God of Change and Glory (Many Gifts, One Spirit)—*The New Century Hymnal* 177

Thanks Be to You—*Gather Comprehensive* 569

Reflection from Hunger for the Word, Year C

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