*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

January 14 - 19

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Monday, January 14 John 2:1-12**

*“A wedding took place in Cana”*

 Jesus steps into a wedding of good friends and fixes a problem. They were out of wine and the crisis could prove socially tragic unless a remedy was found. It is easy for us to conclude that Jesus is only in the business of saving souls and renewing lives. Is he really interested in the commonplace events of my life? Is he really interested in the simple conundrums of everyday living? The Cana story says “yes.” We can invite Jesus into the dilemmas that seem embarrassingly inconsequential – dilemmas that seem ridiculously practical – and ask him to help.

 John tells us that this was Jesus’ first miraculous sign. The changing of water into wine points to the authority of Jesus over the physical universe, deepening and enlarging our understanding of him. He authenticates himself by what he does. He is the “Word made human,” the “Christ who is the Son of God,” not simply the teacher of a few disciples who show up at a wedding. And the faith of those who have begun to follow is deepened. They are “buying in” more deeply all the time as Jesus reveals his glory.

*Thank you, Jesus, for caring about the daily concerns of my life. Amen.*

**Tuesday, January 15 John 2:13-17**

*“Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover”*

 Jesus’ arrival at Passover signals his commitment to the festivals of Judaism. John’s Gospel mentions three Passovers (2:13; 6:4; 11:55), which is often the basis of measuring the duration of Jesus’ three-year ministry. Passover was an annual festival celebrated each spring that retold the story of Israel’s departure from Egypt. Israelite families were spared when the angel of death “passed over” the homes that had been marked by the sacrifice of a lamb. In his anguish, Pharaoh released the Israelites, who fled to Mount Sinai through the desert. Over the centuries Passover had become a pilgrimage festival in which Jewish families were expected to travel to Jerusalem and participate in sacrifice, a symbolic meal, and reflection on Israel’s salvation.

 Jesus’ frustration does not stem from supposed wholesale greed or graft, but from the fact that these transactions are happing in the temple at all. “Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace” is a command to return the temple to its intended use: worship, prayer, instruction, and sacrifice.

*May our church, Jesus, be a place of worship, prayer, instruction, and service. Amen.*

**Wednesday, January 16 Exodus 12:21-27**

*“The first Passover”*

 At the prescribed time, each household is to take a one-year old male lamb, without defect. If any house is too small to consume an entire lamb, neighbors are to share. Moreover, the blood of the young lamb is to be drained into a basin, a hyssop branch is to be dipped into it, and the tops and sides of the doorframes of the house are to be painted with the blood. This will be a sign that the occupants of that house are placing themselves under God’s protection and so will be spared as the angel of death “passes over.”

 This celebration is to be a lasting, eternal ritual. The Israelites from now on are to remember this night, impress it on their collective consciousness, and pass it on to their children. It is a reminder not just of what God has done but of what he continues to do. In fact, it is more than simply remembering. God’s people in some mysterious sense participate in the Exodus themselves, a point that is still affirmed in Passover celebrations to this day: “In every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt.”

*I place myself in your hands, Lord, and you save me. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

January 14 - 19

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Thursday, January 17 Malachi 3:1-4**

*“The Lord will come to his Temple”*

 God came as a baby in Bethlehem, but God will also come again "to judge the living and the dead." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing of Malachi’s prophetic statement that the Lord will come to his Temple, said: “It is very remarkable that we face the thought that God is coming, so calmly, whereas previously peoples trembled at the day of God . . . . We have become so accustomed to the idea of divine love and of God's coming that we no longer feel the shiver of fear that God's coming should arouse in us. We are indifferent to the message, taking only the pleasant and agreeable out of it and forgetting the serious aspect, that the God of the world draws near to the people of our little earth and lays claim to us. The coming of God is truly not only glad tidings, but first of all frightening news for everyone who has a conscience.

 Only when we have felt the terror of the matter, can we recognize the incomparable kindness. God comes into the very midst of evil and of death, and judges the evil in us and in the world. And by judging us, God cleanses and sanctifies us, comes to us with grace and love.”

*Purify me from my sin, Lord, that I may be a temple worthy of you. Amen.*

**Friday, January 18 John 2:18-22**

*“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days”*

 When confronted with Jesus’ actions in clearing the temple of merchants and money-changers, his critics demanded that he show some miraculous sign to demonstrate his authority to cause such upheaval. Curiously, Jesus does not refer to the deficiencies of the temple practices, but instead refers to his own destruction and resurrection. Jesus’ audience misunderstands him and thinks he is referring to the Jerusalem temple. That Jesus would be able to destroy such an edifice – now underway for forty-six years – and rebuild it in three days seemed ludicrous.

 But Jesus was referring to his body, which would serve the same function as the temple, even replacing it. Jesus is predicting his death and resurrection, which will create a new covenant with God and make the services of the Jerusalem temple obsolete. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus says plainly that the hour is coming when true worship will not take place in Jerusalem (at the temple) or in Samaria, but it will happen “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). The life and ministry of Jesus will utterly change how worship and sacrifice are understood.

*Your resurrection, Lord, demonstrates your authority over all things. Amen.*

**Saturday, January 19 John 2:23-25**

*“Jesus knew all about people”*

During this Passover many are intrigued with Jesus, for many “believed.” But we should not make too much of this, for the basis of their faith was the miraculous signs Jesus performed. When Jesus made a demonstration of power and authority, they claimed belief. But throughout the Gospel, faith predicated on God’s showing evidence of himself is criticized as Jesus does when John tells us that even though some of these people believed in him, Jesus would not believe in them.

 The reason given is not that he knew all of them personally, but that he knew all about people in general. John is making a statement about Jesus and humanity. Jesus understood about people and their capacity to be impressed by miracles while unwilling to give their hearts to the miracle worker. Thus, John is also making a theological affirmation about Jesus and divine knowledge. God alone knows the hearts of men and women – and Jesus has this same capacity. Conclusion: Jesus is God.

*You know my heart, Jesus. May it always be committed to you. Amen.*