

*The Path Beyond Bethlehem:*

*Seeing Deeper Truths:*

*"Enough Already!"*

1 Corinthians 12:4-26; John 2:1-11

January 20, 2019

START CLOSE IN

Start close in,  
don't take the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.

Start with  
the ground  
you know,  
the pale ground  
beneath your feet,  
your own  
way to begin  
the conversation.

Start with your own  
question,  
give up on other  
people's questions,  
don't let them  
smother something  
simple.

To hear  
another's voice,  
follow  
your own voice,  
wait until it  
becomes an  
intimate  
private ear  
that can  
really listen  
to another.

Start right now  
take a small step  
you can call your own  
don't follow  
someone else's  
heroics, be humble  
and focused,  
start close in,  
don't mistake  
that other  
for your own.

Start close in,  
don't take  
the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.

...

START CLOSE IN

in River Flow

New & Selected Poems

Many Rivers Press © David Whyte

The path is not a straight line; it's a spiral. You continually come back to things you thought you understood  
...and...then...from your new perspective...see it differently...see deeper truths.

You are not spiraling out of control or spinning your wheels in a ditch.

You are revisiting old truths with a new perspective and a God given ability to release yourself to a new and deeper truth.

Make peace again with the past so you can be in the present and move ever forward.

This is a spiritual practice as well as a practical life skill.

Moving beyond the situation ...far beyond Bethlehem

...precisely because of Bethlehem...taking the path beyond.

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Water to wine. Spiritual gifts named. All part of one whole, indispensable. Wedding guests and gifts. The One Spirit, one body. Possibilities as we gather together...

So....do we have enough....already?  
How much is enough?

Or are we just fed up thinking about it all....enough already!!

Information overload.  
Pressure to get on board.  
Too complicated to know where and how to begin.

Way too much to deal with!!

Friends, despite popular culture and messages...  
There is enough...already.

Abundance for those who can see, those who can hear,  
those who can see deeper truth everywhere they go...

...whose hearts are open.....and so can illumine another way. It's right before you.

Gratitude turns what we have into enough!

Enough and already!

Remember.....

**1. There was a time when a whole crowd was fed... (with basket)**

All I had was a basket, a fish or two and fresh bread. Enough to feed my family, and no more.

He asked me to share.

And before my eyes, and the eyes of several thousand others, there was more than enough as we feasted together...  
on a blessing...made real in us.

**In US! Because we said: Yes.**

**And each time you say yes to sharing of yourself, each time you say yes rather than no to how you will spend your time and money each week....you are the blessing and deeply know: you too do have enough to do the things most needed.**

And aren't we so aware: when you're hungry and alone, a tiny bit of food, of attention is everything!

An abundance of heaven from the meagerness of earth.

More than enough that day....as we shared....

and we were fed...full, not fed up!

**2. The story is told of a woman who knew the thing most needed and knew she already had everything she needed to respond.**

**She recognizes Jesus as God's greatest living gift and give thanks... (with perfume jar)**

All I had was a single bottle of perfume. Expensive? Certainly.

And I poured it and poured it, as mouths fell open and a hush filled the room,  
the aroma of the perfume  
taunting those gathered with him there.

**Just like you.....  
you do the same thing when you open your building every night to those  
without enough home....  
home-less. And those children who come each day!**

**Pour yourself out without regard to expense!**

**Just like you as you give your heart, your schedule each Sunday to those  
you care about here.**

That day, as I poured, they had a hard time seeing it was a moment from heaven...

when the value of the thing most needed far outweighs its cost...

an extravagant moment from heaven...for him and for me.

It was a moment of grace...and I was in the middle of it!

They shouted out about the poor, but He knew...

the poor will always be with us as long as any one of us is only willing to invest the  
value of one bottle of perfume to help each other

...it will take all of us giving...enough!

**3. One day, there was a wedding feast in the town of Cana... (with earthen  
pitcher)**

The poor workers always come last to the party! All we had left for them were the  
empty pitchers.

They were empty, not even water. The wine partied away.

We wondered if somehow we stewards would catch the wrath of the host even though  
the wine was not our responsibility to provide.

But then, glasses were filled with new wine from the water jars, rich and mature wine.

And we were the ones privy to the miracle...us...the lowest of all in attendance!  
The complaining about thirst grew into congratulations on the quality.

The wine was good, and plentiful, and the taste....it was a taste of heaven.  
It was an abundance of blessing...no, not the wine!

The blessing: Jesus took the time to care, share his gifts so all would be served.

The blessing? Imagine if we all were as generous with our time and caring.

**What miracle might you together be able to perform...what would pour out of you?**

~The wedding at Cana.

All fairy tales end at the wedding...leaving you, the reader, to hope in fairy tale endings without a clue about how that could happen in the real world.

Jesus' ministry begins where fairy tales leave off.

It's our real lives Jesus wants us to believe in! And here's how we can begin to do it....

At the wedding, Jesus wasn't so sure initially that the time was right for him to share his true identity.

In our lives, it is hard for us to know what to do when, too!

But even being unsure, he stayed in the midst of the party, the confusion, the demands made of him, the grumblings.

He stays and so knows the time is right for him to act differently....

right away He models the wisdom of staying alongside.

If you're not there, you won't know if its time or not!

Alongside....no bailing, complaining, projecting, abandoning.

Perhaps he knows the time is right when he simply realizes the need at hand...not His need, the people's need...the common good as Paul refers to it.

*Remember later he says the last shall be first and the first last...up ending the usual ways and affirming the inclusive common good.*

Perhaps he knew the time was right for things to be different because things needed to be different! No dah!

And he knew he had the ability to do something about it...as do each of us have the ability,  
the resources, to affect the lives of those around us!

We have enough, already!

Now let's not be ridiculous to equate wine needed at a wedding with what is needed for the common good in your world or the greater world. It's a metaphor!

...one in which the usual rites of passage and the religious rituals and cultural norms were turned upside down...  
the unexpected happened!

The unexpected happened because Jesus made it happen!

**You have to DO something differently for things to be different...do something unexpected!**

**And you have already been given all that you need to be able to do it...  
and abundantly so!  
Enough, already!**

This is the first of Jesus' signs...his first miracle...as told in the book of John.

Jesus sees Himself against a bigger back drop. He gets the bigger picture and sees his call is to the greater good not just some of the time, but all of the time.

He sees He can make choices that yield a different result!  
On that path, revisiting truths/reality/intention, he finds deeper truth.

He took a social faux pas and made it work.

He took the time to try another way to move through the challenge,  
to do something else, something different.

Imagine if we would do the same, try something new and unexpected in the situations we find ourselves in daily....  
and think about the bigger picture and say to ourselves...

~Arguing just isn't working out, so I'm going to try negotiating...give and take. At least something will happen...maybe it will be....a good something!

~Yelling and screaming just makes everyone yell and scream back at me, so I'm going to make it a priority breathe and not react in the moment. ....sit down and actually eat dinner together....or watch TV together....and then see what happens.

~Being enemies isn't working, so I'm going to serve on the same ministry team with him.

~Holding a grudge isn't working, so I'm going to get over it....even if at first I have to pretend.

~Spanking isn't doing any good, so I'm going to try spending more time together and see what effect that might have.

~Gossiping just upsets me more, so I'm going to ask her, herself, what really happened.

~Making threats just didn't work out, so I'm going to try it their way first (which isn't wrong, just not my way) and then see what happens.

~Temper tantrums didn't work when I was 2 and aren't working so well now, so I'm just going to say what it is I am feeling and needing instead.

~Warring just didn't work out, so we're going to try peacing.

~Not using our gifts didn't work out, so we're going to try using them.

We can find all kinds of grounds for divorce, family strife, war, hatred, bigotry, arguments, being enemies, staying unhappy.

**But this is not what God intends...enough already!  
Haven't you had enough already?!  
Don't hang on to old truths!!!**

God intends us to find grounds for love, relationship, peace. And that would be a miracle! To take another look as we stay on the path and come around to new perspectives!

**Even in the life you have just the way you have it,  
you've had enough love, relationship, and peace  
to know you want more of that...**

God creates us with gifts for relationship...and gives us abundant love before we're even born.

Children choose to love right away...with adults...wow, it seems harder and harder to love without judgment as we get older, doesn't it?

But you can change that! And the time to begin is.....  
yours to choose....just like it was Jesus' choice!

And I know, it can seem impossible....

so impossible that we are tempted to give up or deny the need around us, not even try to make a difference.

We scream: enough already!

Our rational, sensible, adult minds tell us we will never be able to overcome the status quo and cultural norms....

most recently our adult minds debate how it is we could ever keep guns out of the hands of those who kill our children, how we keep immigrants out or how to let them in...

we fret that we will never end the glamorization of the many forms of violence in our culture,

or be able to strengthen and heal the most fragile children or emotionally fraught families.

We get mired down in our **limited sense** of what could ever be possible.

**As if** there were no choice and **as if** we don't have the power to live differently when we do!

**As if** the world doesn't change one person at a time....which is the way the world has ever really been able to change and sustain.

Our passages today invite us to see God's nature is to give in abundance and live empowered graciousness.

Do we trust in God's abundance and graciousness?  
Will we embrace how Jesus' models it for us.....and live it?



**Friends we do have enough....within ourselves  
to begin to begin  
and when we just even begin....  
everything changes!**

And now, now! .....we can come to know the time is right for us to use our gifts, our  
treasure of love inside  
that enables us to do the unexpected....

the time has come when we realize we can touch the realities of those around us for  
good....not our good alone...

but the good of all...**the common good. A deeper truth!**

We can, we do have enough!

The choice: sharing an unexpected expression of hopeful love.....or make a selfish or  
stubborn or routine choice serving our own good alone!

The choice: Give up on others or invest in others?

Embracing the common good...can be the beginning of something new coming forward  
in you!

A new perspective on an old truth!

**In your life, it's time for Jesus to help you turn**

**whiskey/over eating/over scheduling  
into self-awareness,**

**anger into energy,**

**facts into wisdom,**

**blame into awareness,**

**loneliness into church community,**

**self-doubt into good questions to ask yourself and others...**

**It's your choice.**

Enough already! Enough, already. It's time!  
The best is indeed yet to come!

Let Jesus in,  
release your deep longing to love yourself as others love you,  
to want for all others what you want for yourself!  
Use your gifts and do the unexpected  
and find yourself joy-filled serving what's good for you  
by serving what is best for all!

So through ordinary time we journey with a deepened understanding of the path we are  
on  
and who we are as we move forward...  
spiraling toward deepening truths.

Old truths revisited, revised, and deepened.

So, as you listened, what old truth did you bump into and revisit this morning?

You are no longer the person you were when you first discovered it...and as you  
journey,

it no longer is enough, the right truth for this time and place in your life.

Take a moment. Name that deeper truth you can now embrace. Write it down in your  
bulletin, in your heart.

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“You know you are on the right path when you start feeling peace in situations where  
you would normally feel tension.”

Ego says, “Once everything fall into place, I’ll feel peace. Spirit says, “Find your peace,  
and then everything will fall into place.”