

CHAPTER 17: A SOCIETY OF JOY

GOSPEL READINGS: John 2:1-11

“We are... soul-thirsty for a drink of joy that will satisfy us eternally and infinitely. The kingdom is the society in which the Jesus Creed transforms life. One feature of that transformation is that what humans yearn for they find in Jesus. This joy is not giddiness; it is inner contentment that comes from knowing that what we yearn for is loving God and others.” (McKnight, p.161)

1. Where do you seek out joy?
2. Are there aspects of life that should be joyful, but you find difficulty in experiencing?
3. Why do you think we were made with “deep yearnings of the spirit”?¹

Read John 2:1-11. McKnight describes the miracles and signs that Jesus performed as glimpses of the joy that awaits us...as revelations that “draw down a little bit of heaven’s joy to earth, that suddenly make life in this world light up in glory, and that convert the humdrum routine of reality into the joy of life.” Looking at the first miracle that Jesus performs...

4. Why might a wedding scene be an ideal event to display “heaven’s joy”?
5. What do you make of Jesus’ hesitance to act, even at the prompting of his mother?
6. How is Mary’s faith indicative of the joy she holds in her heart?
7. With Jesus’ display of abundance, how does he reveal God’s desire to both *provide for and be the joy of the kingdom* ...and our lives?
8. How do you perceive the provision of God?
 - a. Does he meet your basic needs?
 - b. Does he surpass those needs and give you what you desire?
 - c. Does he surprise you with an abundance of what you need *and desire*?
9. How might daily reflection upon the *Jesus Creed* reorient you to experience *joy* as heaven intends?
10. Who is someone in your life who needs a reminder that Jesus has revealed himself as “the abundant provider of the joy that comes from knowing the love of God”?
Spend some time praying for that person... even if it’s yourself.

“Jesus is seen in this wine for who he really is: the one who not only provides but is himself the joy of the kingdom.”

¹ See page 161. McKnight refers to Craig Barnes’ book *Yearnings* and posits that there’s purpose to our *need* as a “godlike mark.”

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