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Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Santa Rosa, CA

January 19, 2025

Year C, 2 Epiphany, Revised Common Lectionary

[Isaiah 62:1-5](#)

[Psalm 36:5-10](#)

[1 Corinthians 12:1-11](#)

[John 2:1-11](#)

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Here's a poem called "God Says Yes to Me," by Kaylin Haught.¹

I asked God if it was okay to be melodramatic
and she said yes
I asked her if it was okay to be short
and she said it sure is
I asked her if I could wear nail polish
or not wear nail polish
and she said honey
she calls me that sometimes
she said you can do just exactly
what you want to
Thanks God I said
And is it even okay if I don't paragraph
my letters
Sweetcakes God said
who knows where she picked that up
what I'm telling you is
Yes Yes Yes

¹ Kaylin Haught, "God Says Yes to Me," from *The Palm of Your Hand* (Tilbury House, 1995).

I was given that poem by a wise and curmudgeonly priest named Lori Lowe, one of my group leaders in the discernment process for ordination. I was 21 and trying to figure out what I wanted and what God wanted for me and whether it was OK to want things at all, and Lori, seeing right through my overscrupulous goody-goody little self, told me to go read this poem about a God who doesn't condemn us for our yearnings but rejoices in them. Sweetcakes, what I am telling you is yes; yes; yes. Who is this God of yes; this God of abundance; this God of the wedding feast? Who is this God of six huge vats of wine, not just any wine but the best wine, pouring forth at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, announcing him on the scene? "Jesus did this, the first of his signs, and his disciples believed in him."

No wedding could possibly need or use this much wine. More than six hundred of today's wine bottles' worth. A miracle of dramatic overprovision, similar in that way to the miracle of the loaves and the fishes; a miracle of lavishness, of enough and more so, a cup that runneth over. Here we see a part of God's character: this is not the God of prudent caution and sensible shoes. This is the God who welcomes back the prodigal son by killing the fatted calf, the God who rejoices more over a single redeemed sinner than a hundred pious souls, the God of the grand gesture, God the hopeless romantic.

As human beings we long to live in God's abundance. And indeed we live in an abundant world, full of beauty and full of resources, a world that has enough for all of us and more to spare. Yet instead of living out the pattern of God's abundance we tend instead to settle for its counterfeit: scarcity for some and hoarding for others.

Hoarding might seem like abundance, but in fact it's grounded in the basic assumption of scarcity. It's only if I truly believe deep down that there is not enough to go around that I have to store up a stash for me, put fences around it, and pile it high lest I should run out. A world where some starve or live on the streets while others control enough wealth to buy entire nations is a world that believes in scarcity, a world of the zero-sum game.

Jesus asks the servants to fill those six great vats with water and he turns it into wine; wine the drink of festivity, of conviviality, of joy. The scholar Andrew McGowan reminds us that in the ancient Mediterranean wine was not just festive drink, though it was that, but in a real sense also food; a way of preserving the calories and nutrition of fresh grapes in a way that would store and last before refrigeration.² So, McGowan writes, this is a miracle not just about a treat but about sustenance; not just about celebration but about keeping everyone fed.

But of course it is about celebration too. And wine, like other substances, can bring celebration but can also bring misery. God's abundance is not the same thing as overconsumption or abuse. In fact at its heart addiction may well also be a kind of hoarding—the deep conviction that in this world there is not enough for us; not enough pleasure, not enough joy; and so we must have a little more, and a little more, and a little more, whether it's of alcohol or another drug or sex or a bet or a purchase, the deep longing born of the fear that there is not enough for us and that we ourselves are not enough.

² “The Wine at Cana,” *Andrew's Version* (January 14, 2025), <https://abmcg.substack.com/p/the-wine-at-cana>.

Perhaps part of what Jesus is saying to us today with this miracle of the six ludicrous jars is that in God's economy, in God's kingdom, there is enough and to spare, that our grabbing fists will relax into open hands and that we will stretch them out toward one another.

Tomorrow is Martin Luther King Jr.'s federal holiday, a day that celebrates the birthday of an activist whose journey led him from civil rights to human rights, who began with the fight for racial equality and who, while never leaving that fight behind, had broadened it by the end of his life to a struggle against poverty for those of every race. Dr. King knew that dignity and rights—and also material prosperity—are not a zero-sum game, not a pie in which if your slice gets bigger my slice gets smaller, but rather a game of abundance. When I am freer you are freer, when you have more dignity I have more dignity. As this nation moves into a new presidential administration tomorrow at a time fraught with tensions and hopes and fears and divisions, one thing we might pray for is the clarity of vision, for our leaders and our whole society, to seek real abundance: not the false abundance of scarcity and hoarding, but the true abundance that is dignity and prosperity for all.

And let us also pray for ourselves right here in this place; that we might be instruments of God's abundance, reconcilers and healers, that the life that flows from this font full of water and this table laden with wine might burst out through us into the world, that through us God might invite everyone everywhere to the great wedding feast.