

Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10, 1 Cor 12:1-11, John 2:1-11

In the Morning Prayer service in our prayer book, in one of the prayers for mission at the end of the service, we find this prayer: “O God, grant that people everywhere may seek after thee and find thee.”

I’ve been meditating on this phrase all week. Because it’s a rather interesting phrase, if you think about it. It points to something mysterious and unexpected in the nature of our God. Contrary to what one might expect about a being as vast and powerful as God, our Lord is a God we have to *seek* after, and pray that we might find.

Our God is a hidden God. Invisible by nature, so that the ancient Israelites, unlike their neighbors, made no images or depictions of the appearance of their God. God cannot be easily viewed. His presence is usually subtle.

And this is a hard thing for us humans. It’s hard to lack a vision, or tangible proof of God’s presence, God’s very existence. I imagine most of us here have experienced numerous moments of deep yearning for a clear experience of God. For a clear proof of His existence to quench our doubts or a clear message from Him to guide us in our uncertainty.

No wonder the crowds flocked after Jesus. When rumors began to spread, when the crowds began to suspect who – and *what* – He was, they followed Him in droves. They listened for His teaching and guidance. They drew near to Him, just to be in His presence.

They reached out to touch Him – to seek healing, or blessing, or perhaps simply to hold onto Him – to grasp onto God. Isn’t this a yearning lurking deep in so many of our hearts?

The daily Morning Prayer readings this week have walked through the story of Creation. Of man placed by God in the Garden of Eden to tend it and keep it. Of the first humans walking through the garden each day with God in the cool of the evening. And of the first sin, that caused the man and the woman to hide, so that they never walked with God in the garden again.

I think we all feel and sometimes ache from that sense of separation. And we long to reach out and touch God and be assured of His presence, of His existence, of His love.

Christian teachers say that there are good reasons for God’s presence to be subtle. It gives us freedom – to make decisions without feeling the pressure of God’s overwhelming presence and glory and power. It gives us the chance to practice serving God out of love, and not out of fear of His power. It allows us to experience the radiance and beauty of faith, which would not exist if God was constantly filling all our senses.

But still it is difficult, in this mortal life, before the time when we will see God face to face. When we now glimpse Him only “as through a glass, darkly”.

And so, strangely enough, we find it to be for most of those present at the wedding at Cana. When Jesus first “reveals” His glory, and the servant are astonished, and His disciples believe, and His Mother smiles, because she knew all along, all the other wedding guests have no idea. They miss the miracle completely.

I feel like we almost miss it, too. The miracle is told in such an odd way in this story. There is no flash of lightning, no brilliant transformation. We don’t even notice the moment of change.

There’s no sentence – “and then the water transformed into wine”. No! The first we hear is, “and when the steward tasted the water which had become wine”. What an odd way to tell the story! When did the “magic” happen? Did Jesus touch the water? Was it transformed even as it was poured? We just don’t know!

And perhaps that’s just it. What if not even the servants, or the disciples, noticed the moment? I wonder if the story of the wedding at Cana tells us something very true about how we experience God.

Even in the *miracles*, even in moments when He “reveals His glory”, even when the world, or our lives, are transformed, God doesn’t act with a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder. So much of our experience of God happens in silent wonder, in invisible transformation. No less real for being silent or invisible, but harder to grasp, harder to hold onto.

This is the mysterious, subtle God we worship. For reasons we do not comprehend, our God can grant us a vision in perfect clarity, or overwhelm us with an unquestionable miracle, but usually makes His Presence known so quietly, so subtly, we have to really watch and listen for glimpses of God.

This is perhaps *the* great spiritual practice and discipline of a Christian – to be attentive for the presence of God – to open the ears and eyes of our hearts so we are ready to hear and respond to God.

Even when God came to earth in tangible form, He was cloaked in human flesh. In the living, breathing, tangible, visible person of Jesus Christ, God was still hidden enough that many did not recognize Him.

And when He comes to earth each Sunday, each Eucharist, on each altar, where He makes Himself really present to us – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – He is cloaked in the forms of bread and wine. Still He is present so subtly.

But the miracle is there. The transformation has occurred, even if we feel like we just missed it. And we can reach out our hands, and we can grasp God – opening our hands and opening our hearts – seeking to detect His presence.

He is there, as He is there every day – all around, and just below the surface of our perception. Our invisible, hidden, miraculous God, reaching out to us, so that, in seeking Him, we may find Him.