

An abridged form of this segment, which describes other aspects of The Inward Way, was presented to the congregation of the Creative Life Church in Hot Springs, AR, on Sunday, August 16, 2009. Your comments are welcome via email: [creationspirit@gmail.com](mailto:creationspirit@gmail.com). Succeeding presentations regarding other aspects of The Inward Way will be made on the third Sunday of each month at the 10:30 AM service of the Creative Life Church, 229 Bayard Street, Hot Springs, AR. The public is invited. In addition, meetings of The Aristotle Group, formed for purposes of metaphysical exchange, are held on the third Saturday of each month from 10AM-noon at the same location. These meetings also are open to the public and participation is encouraged.

## The Inward Way: The First Signs

### Chapter Two, Gospel of John

The second chapter of the Gospel of John is divided into three parts. The first deals with the so-called wedding at Cana; the second with the cleansing of the Temple; and the third deals with Jesus' trip to Jerusalem.

You will recall that at the wedding Jesus' mother asks Jesus to make more wine for the festive event. Jesus responds that this is not yet his time, but as is true with most mother-son relationships, mother gets her way, and Jesus is reported to have changed jugs of water into wine. Metaphorically or symbolically speaking, this story has nothing at all to do either with the normal application of the term wedding, or with changing water into wine.

Overall, the spiritual meaning of Chapter Two is conveyed at first by the locations mentioned in relation to Jesus' spiritual travels. If we first look at the setting of the wedding and then forward to the next location for Jesus' travels, we are able to place this story in a very different context than otherwise possible. When the path for his journey is defined, symbolically it is akin to disclosing the path Jesus' spiritual consciousness is taking on its journey to fulfillment and purity. Cana in Galilee refers to the conscious center that focuses on ceasing endless activity in order to come into closer contact with God. These passages relate most directly, then, to cleansing old ways of thought that really do not serve higher good. Thus we respond to the need to slow down our 'monkey minds' that chatter endlessly so we can hear the still, small voice found only inwardly.

Capernaum, the next place in Jesus' travels, refers to the inner conviction placed in the power of compassion. Spiritually, compassion for our journey heals and restores the fullness of Being and living only the Truth heard inwardly. The wedding thus takes on the meaning of arriving at the means of wedding our awareness of inner Truth, wisdom, with the very process of expressing or demonstrating its spiritual character out into the world. What a powerful message we would have missed if we had read this story only in a literal context.

Next, we come to the main characters in this allegory: Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Jesus, himself. Mary is the metaphor for the sense of innocence that provides receptivity to higher consciousness, a much-enlarged perspective about spiritual Life—a much purer

dimension of spirituality than that of ego consciousness. Symbolically, it is the attitude of innocence that mothers the larger view out of the womb of Wisdom. By saying his time has not yet come, Jesus reflects the idea that, even for us, when we are in transition from one way of living to the more spiritual way, we are a bit reluctant to express the larger view in all its fullness. Our spiritual consciousness is not yet fully mature. The ultimate path of righteousness is not quite clear. At this point, Jesus' declaration depicts a mind exhibiting reluctance rather than full conviction. All in all, this typifies our own reluctance to shift from ego consciousness to spiritual consciousness as we grow spiritually. We are fearful of stepping out in a higher awareness until we feel fully confident in it.

And what is it that Mary does? As depicted in this Scriptural allegory, Mary puts Jesus in a position where he has to take the leap of faith that will get him exactly to this new level of consciousness, even though he may think he is not yet quite ready for it. Metaphorically, this passage speaks to the nature of our own journey: abiding innocence and Truth instead of fear launches us in that new direction immediately, and we come to see that we that we can demonstrate our relation with this new way, after all.

So, then, what is this wedding about? The wedding speaks of bonding the Truth found in the awareness of spiritual consciousness with its demonstration or expression. It is that simple when we give up self-importance in the ultimate act of humility. Humility is not about expressing self-righteousness, thinking we know better than Truth itself. Spiritually speaking, humility is about getting out of our own way—out of our emotions and the intellectual pursuit of Truth—and letting Truth speak for itself. By stilling our emotions (the water) and own beliefs and opinions, Truth comes to the fore, and we know without a shadow of doubt that Truth is what we are called to express, to demonstrate—Truth, and *only* Truth.

Can you just imagine an outer sign like changing water into wine? There have been many explanations of exactly how Jesus would and could have done this. One depicts Jesus seeing all as God, without limitation of any kind, thus enabling him to see the water and wine as One. Given this context, water and wine were the same to him: that is all there is, metaphorically and metaphysically speaking—the Spirit (wine) of Truth. It is only out of the ego conscious perspective of separation, duality, and difference that they are not alike. More important to metaphysical understanding, if we have given credence to the idea that there is *anything but the voice or reality of Spirit*, that declaration alone tells us that we have agreed to function in a world of duality, and that we believe we are separate from God. The water speaks to the flow of emotional life. Spiritually, however, there is not wine, the Truth of the Holy Spirit, and all else. There is only the Truth.

It will do us good as we proceed through these marvelous depictions of Truth to remember that these stories convey the very same Truth over and over again. The same Truth is depicted in various ways so those who need to gain meaning in a particular way have the opportunity for doing so. In this story of water and wine, the Spirit, expressed as wine, speaks to our conviction of Loving compassion for all of humanity. Giving ourselves compassionately to Truth is to honor it with the fullness of dignity it deserves, along with all those served by Truth's demonstration.

What do the jars have to do with anything: the jars themselves—the number of them, or even their portrayal of size? We have heard elsewhere that the number six refers to completion—completion on a level higher than three, yet not fully complete—as reflected in the even higher portrayal of completion embodied in the numeral nine, or the highest, by the numeral twelve. So what we are seeing here is the indication that the one's commitment to demonstrating or expressing Truth is not fully implemented until Truth is witnessed with absolute regularity and without fear. As depicted, Jesus himself reinforces such insufficiency by saying that his time has not yet come. The use of the jar metaphor paints the picture of the largeness of our capacity to express our faith in inner Truth with full conviction.

Thus, time and again we are called to remember that Scripture speaks to the awareness of spiritual consciousness and its power to demonstrate Life. Of course, this is contrary to common translation, which falsely depicts the purpose of Scripture in the misdirected form of ego consciousness and outward signs.

In this allegory, then, Jesus is asked to change the level or dimension of understanding so the wedding of spiritual consciousness and Truth's demonstration will be complete. As depicted literally, we are told that the normal routine of intellectual, emotional, and social pursuit is the better way, so the consciousness of the president of the occasion says that this is usually what is offered first. We get drunk on intellectual understanding and emotional socialization gained through mental gymnastics and social exchange, what we falsely think is the best and only pursuit of Life. As the wedding of superficiality and self-importance goes on, however, such pursuits fail to inspire at the deepest levels.

Contrarily, the one hosting the wedding declares that Jesus has saved the best for last. Metaphorical or symbolic meaning indicates that the voice of the Holy Spirit or Truth can be only what it is: the only righteous way, the bottom line, after all is said and done—first, last, and always. Jesus, the symbol for unfettered commitment to demonstrating the voice of the Christ, thus defines the Holy Spirit (portrayed as wine) as the Truth, the very best—especially when considering the contrast between earthly pursuit and Truth discerned. Spiritual awareness is what The Inward Way demonstrates: the Way, the Truth and Life. We can rest assured that we all go through this transition from lower to higher forms of spiritual discernment—on to higher and higher dimensions of consciousness and being.

It is said that the guests did not know where the wine had come from—that only the servants knew. This merely indicates that those who were unfamiliar with spiritual consciousness would naturally have no clue. They are guests at a wedding they don't yet understand, so how could they know the source, called Spirit? The servants? The servants are those inspirational renderings—all those whispers of Truth heard inwardly—that serve to demonstrate only their image and likeness.

As we proceed to the story about cleansing the temple, by now we know that the term temple is a metaphor for our own temple, the sacred container of inner wisdom each of us is. In order to faithfully demonstrate spiritual awareness we must constantly cleanse ourselves of all that prevents us from doing so. As used by Jesus, the term Passover—the season in which this story takes place—conveys the passing from one dimension of

consciousness to a higher or deeper one: from ego consciousness to the consciousness founded in spirituality. It is the new awareness which comes from the regenerative process guided by the Holy Spirit, defined as the Christ, the inner voice that speaks when we silence our own beliefs and opinions.

You will recall that Jesus cleared the moneychangers, the cattle, and so on, out of the Temple. Literally this is how it is described. However, looking at this passage with metaphysical eyes, what we are being shown is that the currency or coinage of scattered erroneous thoughts, beliefs, and opinions of self-righteousness and material accumulation are inappropriate ingredients or occupants of our inner Temple. Error is currency that has no value in our Temple. It has no place there. The Temple is that inner place where we find only Truth. Truth is the only real spiritual currency. The message is that we should not be trading, negotiating or demonstrating our lives in the currency of ego consciousness. Indeed, Jesus—the commitment to demonstrate spiritual consciousness only—turns the tables on ego consciousness. Unfortunately, ego consciousness is a world many still take to be sacred; we worship it still, when it deserves no such dignity.

How beautifully the symbolism of casting out the animals and moneychangers speaks to the regenerative process. Cleansing these creatures of habit, these animal-like figures of self-importance that speak so loudly of erroneous beliefs and opinions, is such a clear way of saying to us that we must do the same if our inner temple is to be made clean and holy. It is akin to replacing our computer hard drive so we can begin yet again with a whole new set of input.

When Jesus was asked by what authority he could act like this, he said that if they destroyed this new temple, he could raise up another again in three days. Did you notice that Jesus did not answer the question about the authority he had to scatter these images? Why did he not? He did not have to. Truth needs no defense or explanation; it just is. Jesus knew that even if he were to explain this to them, they were not capable of understanding because they were creatures of ego consciousness. Instead, Jesus tells the inquisitors that the Temple of Truth need not be completed or restored at all—it is complete and whole, and wholly spiritual, now and forever—no matter what ego says or wants to convince us of to the contrary.

Instead—bypassing the question that did not need to be dignified with an answer—Jesus responds by saying that if this new temple were destroyed by the false accusations of the naysayers, he would rebuild it in three days. They were astonished by his response, saying that it had taken them forty-six years to build this temple, so how could he rebuild it in just three days? This is the clue that Jesus was not speaking of the physical temple before them. Rather, commitment to spiritual consciousness speaks to bringing our inner temple of spiritual consciousness to completion simply by exchanging the old currency for the one we hold most dear: abiding only inner Truth. Thus it is spiritual awareness that puts us in touch with the completed spiritual being we already are, and always will be.

Now we will speak briefly to Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. First of all, remember that we are still in the time of the Passover season. So we are dealing with the changes in consciousness revealed in the previous stories. By now we understand that Jesus is

characterized by a lifetime commitment to communing with and demonstrating only the Christ, the Truth, highest good—being true to our divine nature. Jerusalem symbolizes yet another dimension of consciousness, the consciousness of spiritual peace. The more we give ourselves to being aware of and abiding inner wisdom, the Christ, the more poise and confidence we gain in demonstrating wisdom into being. The fullness of commitment Jesus witnessed comes from discerning the power of the Holy Spirit or the Christ more and more, until the practice becomes spiritual reality. Indeed, when we come to Life with a consciousness open to spiritual good, we realize a dimension of sweetness and stillness within that defies description. Here, in one short paragraph, the power of the Inward Way is affirmed with abundance. Indeed, spiritual consciousness turns the tables on ego consciousness.

It seems to me that Jesus' expression that "he knew all the people" is akin to him saying "he knew our name before we were born." Our name before we were born refers to what we each are—and always will be—no matter what we have come to believe about ourselves: divine. One. God. Truth. Besides, we need names or labels only as we function in the world of ego consciousness. Yes, in the world of spiritual consciousness we are simply—and wonderfully—just divine.

Further, when it is said that Jesus knew all people and did not want to trust himself to them, metaphysically, it becomes clear that when we trust ourselves to that which is not wholly spiritual in nature, this is what will transpire in our lives. It is what we will become, or at least what we will project—what we have come to *think* we are because of our agreement with what others have told us we are, instead of what we *really* are. This is the height of self-importance. As defined earlier in our conversations, self-importance is the ego conscious conviction and faith in one's own beliefs and opinions instead of spiritual Truth. Such an investment is a commitment to personal vanity—a belief that we are separate from God, our divine essence—the vanity of vanities, as Shakespeare told us.

This story of the Gospel of John is really about the spiritual nature of character. As we grow in confidence and poise while demonstrating the character of Truth, we, too, will be recognized for that very Truth. Thus we replicate the example Jesus implies as we demonstrate The Inward Way out into this world. Our character does indeed inform by example.

We can discern these spiritual offerings because they relate directly to our innate divinity. It is like being able to recognize some character trait in another because we have that some trait in us. One is impossible without the other; one provides us with the basis of discernment of the other—they are inseparable. Since coming to understand that inseparability renders duality nonexistent, our lives are changing quite dramatically.

Now that you have had a taste of the Kingdom speaking to you, it will be very difficult to avert it. It is clear to me that you are arriving at spiritual meaning through individual discernment—in this way we are called to our Truth, our highest good. Such marvelous revelations are occurring moment by moment. And they will continue. When abiding spiritual awareness, Truth simply shows up. If repetition is needed for reinforcement, it, also, is sure to come.

So, let The Inner Way simmer for a while, and serve as a spiritual underpinning as we move on to Chapter Three of the Gospel of John. There we will fathom the metaphorical meaning of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus and Jesus' ministry in Judaea. I'll be looking for your very own spiritual translations by the time we next meet.