

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

“Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, ‘Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.’ So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now,’ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”

—The Gospel of John

By Ken Woodley

When we are born into this world all of us are like clear, small streams sprung from the earth.

A baby boy or girl is crystal clear.

Pure.

Like liquid spirit.

From that moment on, however, anything can happen to the stream of our lives, and much of it is beyond our control.

As with nature’s watery streams, our own lives pick up bits and pieces of the world.

Our streams flow where gravity takes them.

And gravity always takes us, as it does all streams, toward tributaries.

We encounter the streams of others.

People we meet in life and with whom we form relationships. People whose clear, crystal streams strengthen our own.

And we grow toward the strong and good river that we can become.

But our streams can also become polluted by others. Contaminated.

There are people who are more like a hit-and-run accident in our lives. They run into us, dent us, scratch us. Perhaps even break us in some way. And then they drive off, drive away, and we are left only with the scars.

Good, bad, ugly and beautiful streams join our own, just as we become tributaries to the streams—to the lives—of others.

The passing of years has an undoubted and cumulative effect. No matter how much we want to believe that the stream of our life is as crystal clear and pure as it was when we first flowed into the world, the truth is that life has muddied us in some way.

Muddied us all.

There is no way to avoid it.

Some of our pollution is our own fault.

Some is the fault of others.

But no matter how muddy and polluted life makes us, that mud and that pollution is not the end of the story.

If we keep on flowing.

If we don't allow the world's pollution to dam our stream and keep it from the sea of God's love.

If we keep flowing around the next bend of our life's river and believe that we will find Jesus waiting for us.

Where Jesus will turn our water into wine.

Where Jesus will draw out the water of our lives and, with mercy and love, offer us a taste of a pure vintage that we never knew was inside us.

Where Jesus will show us how the dents and scratches and scars of our lives—even where we are broken—can fit miraculously into the dents, scratches, scars and broken places in the lives of others.

And how that miracle can heal us all.

Jesus turning the water of our lives into wine, a communion of God's love and grace for each of us.

Saving the best for last.