

## Small Group Lesson for the week of January 17, 2010

### Getting to Know You

1. What is the funniest thing you ever saw at a wedding?
2. Do you tend to be optimistic about the future or pessimistic? Would you describe yourself as patient?
3. What do you think causes people to see the “glass half full” or the “glass half empty?”

### Digging into the Scriptures

1. Read Isaiah 62: 1-5. God is promising restoration for his people who have just returned to their homeland after a long exile. However, the people are getting discouraged because the rebuilding is taking a long time. When it seems like God isn't moving or isn't moving fast enough, how do you handle that?
2. Can you think of any other Bible stories where God seemed to be taking too long? Take a look at Genesis 15: 1-5. God promises Abram that he will have many descendents even though he and Sarah have no children and are quite old. Take a look at Genesis 18: 9-15. This passage reveals the unbelief that Sarah had. Now read Genesis 16: 1-5. How did this act of impatience turn out? What can we learn from this?
3. In John 2: 10, the master of the wedding feast says, “...but you have saved the best till now.” Pastor Sam helped us see that in John's gospel, this is an important statement that tells us how God has chosen to act. He began his redemptive work through Israel, but “saved the best till” Jesus came. In what other ways can we describe God as “saving the best till now...”?
4. Jesus re-purposes the ceremonial washing jars in John 2: 6-7. How does he re-purpose things or people today? In other words, how does Jesus continue to bring renewal to the world?
5. Do you think that there might be some places in your life or some talents or possessions that you have that God would like to re-purpose? Could those things help him bring renewal to the world?

### @ The End of the Day

1. Notice how the servants (John 2: 6-9), those doing the actual work, are aware of the miracle that has taken place, but the master of the banquet is not. When we are involved and obedient, we can best see the work of God all around us. Where are you involved? Do you see God at work? Describe how.
2. Do you have a hobby? Do you have a prized possession? Do you have goals? Take a moment and jot down some examples of each. Now ask yourself this question: “If fear was not a factor, how could God re-purpose these things to bring renewal to the world?” Now pray about your responses.

## Saving the Best for Last

Isaiah 62: 1-5, Jn. 2: 1-11

[wedding disaster video from You Tube]

Hidden in this wedding story, is a God-reality that we need to hear.

- I. The Promise of Old
  - a. (Isaiah 62: 1-5) Return of exiles to Judah, but the return is marked by suffering and the restoration isn't happening as fast as they'd thought.
  - b. God promises to so completely redeem His people Israel, that they would not only be glorious, but would be a tool for the redemption of all humanity. (vv. 1-4)
  - c. This is the strong word we heard again last week. Patience, faith, trust...God will keep his word [why Advent is so helpful]
- II. The Miraculous New Day
  - a. In God's time [documentary not snapshot]
  - b. God did keep his word
  - c. The Messiah comes to redeem, not just Israel, but all humanity
  - d. Listen to John the Baptist's testimony (John 1: 29-34)
  - e. God re-purposes his people
  - f. Redefines salvation to include all humanity through Jesus
- III. God saved the best for last
  - a. Look at the miracle in Cana
  - b. Jesus re-purposes the ceremonial washing jars
  - c. Fills them with wine [bookends of his earthly ministry]
  - d. Master of the banquet speaks prophetic words
  - e. "The best has been saved till now"
- IV. God is still in this business
  - a. Re-purposing for his glory
    - i. Buildings
    - ii. People = salvation!
  - b. Saving the best till now
  - c. Because God is continually renewing and repurposing, the best is always yet to come!

Close: Two Living Illustrations we can watch unfold. One today, another in the year ahead

1. Communion—common meal elements, now repurposed
2. Our Physical Facilities – re-purposed for more effective Kingdom Impact

## Saving the Best for Last

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For Reflection: Two Living Illustrations we can watch unfold. One today, another in the year ahead

- 3. Communion—common meal elements, now re-purposed
- 4. Our Physical Facilities – re-purposed for more effective Kingdom Impact