



Daily Reflections

June 12, 2018

Scripture

1 Kings 17: 7-16

The brook near where Elijah was hiding ran dry,
because no rain had fallen in the land.

So the LORD said to Elijah:

"Move on to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there.

I have designated a widow there to provide for you."

He left and went to Zarephath.

As he arrived at the entrance of the city,

a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her,

"Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink."

She left to get it, and he called out after her,

"Please bring along a bit of bread."

She answered, "As the LORD, your God, lives,

I have nothing baked;

there is only a handful of flour in my jar

and a little oil in my jug.

Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks,

to go in and prepare something for myself and my son;

when we have eaten it, we shall die."

Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid.

Go and do as you propose.

But first make me a little cake and bring it to me.

Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son.

For the LORD, the God of Israel, says,

'The jar of flour shall not go empty,
nor the jug of oil run dry,
until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'
She left and did as Elijah had said.
She was able to eat for a year, and Elijah and her son as well;
the jar of flour did not go empty,
nor the jug of oil run dry,
as the LORD had foretold through Elijah.

Our Scripture Reflection

Nothing happens by chance in God's Kingdom. A dry brook results in God calling a thirsty Elijah to go to a poor widow who will care for him, and who ends up witnessing a tremendous act of compassion carried out by Elijah on God's behalf. What man calls coincidence is actually the unfolding of God's Holy plan.

Food for your Journey

Instead of an "energy industry," I see a resource addiction that saps money and preserves self-destructive expectations. I see, instead of food and education "industries," an obesity epidemic and a debt-driven education crisis. Instead of a pharmaceutical industry, I see a new set of mental and physical discontents, like rates of suspiciously normally "abnormal" mental illnesses and drugs whose lists of "side effects" are longer than the Magna Carta. Instead of a "media industry," I see news that actually misinforms instead of enlightens -- rusting the beams of democracy -- and entertainment that merely titillates.

In short, I see an outcomes gap: a yawning chasm the size of the Grand Canyon between what our economy produces and what you might call a meaningfully well-lived life, what the ancient Greeks called eudaimonia.

The economy we have today will let you chow down on a supersized McBurger, check derivative prices on your latest smartphone, and drive your giant SUV down the block to buy a McMansion on hypercredit. It's a vision of the good life that I call ... hedonic opulence. And it's a conception built in and for the industrial age: about having more.

Now consider a different vision: maybe crafting a fine meal, to be accompanied by local, award-winning, microbrewed beer your friends have brought over, and then walking back to the studio where you're designing a building whose goal is nothing less than rivaling the Sagrada Familia. That's an alternate vision, one I call eudaimonic prosperity, and it's about living meaningfully well. Its purpose is not merely passive, slack-jawed "consuming" but living: doing, achieving, fulfilling, becoming, inspiring, transcending, creating, accomplishing -- all the stuff that matters the most.

--Umair Haque, "Is a well-lived life worth anything?" Harvard Business Review, May 12, 2011.

A Prayer from the Heart

Gracious Father, So many people have given up on faith in You and have instead come to trust exclusively in science and technology. Lord, You give us everything that is good. Wake up Your sleepy people so that they may realize that without You nothing is possible. Amen