

THE QUEST

Episode 2: The Appointed Task

Our God is a God of abundance, but He doesn't make extras. In this episode, we explore what it means that God has providentially placed each of us in this world for a purpose, and how we can live that purpose with courage and confidence.

In Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, the Hobbit Frodo Baggins is given an "appointed task" — a task that is meant for him, and not for another. In a similar way, we each have a purpose in this life. To take up this task is a question of truthfulness, because doing so means being true to who you are. In a fundamental way, the moral life isn't just about being good; it's about being our truest selves. Both history and Sacred Scripture inspire us with the courage to take up our appointed tasks, no matter how difficult our circumstances. Scripture in particular is instructive, because the meaning of Scripture is personal: It is your story. Whether it's David, Judith, Mary or the rich young man: All of their stories are about us.

"Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them."

– St. Therese of Lisieux

Moral action isn't usually about great battles or high drama. As we can see in the novels of Jane

Austen or the wisdom of St. Therese, we make most of our moral decisions in the quiet moments, when nobody is watching. But these little moments are significant, and we should always look for opportunities to do good.

"I wonder what sort of tale we have fallen into?"

– Sam, in *Lord of the Rings*

As the Hobbit Sam suggests, the order of one's life is a narrative order. We really are on a quest to become our best and truest selves, and to take up our appointed tasks with courage.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When you think of your life as a kind of story, what kind of story comes to mind? What does your answer tell you about how you understand yourself and your own appointed task? Where have the most important moral decisions occurred in your life? From the outside, would they have appeared large or small?

SUGGESTED READINGS

- "Pied Beauty," by Gerard Manley Hopkins
- *The Lord of the Rings*, by J.R.R. Tolkien
- *Exodus*, Chapters 1-13 (Moses and the Flight from Egypt)
- *My Sister, St. Thérèse*, by Celine Martin