

Sermon 2007 Epiphany 2
Text: John 2:1-11
Theme: "Everything in New"

Nothing Jesus does is coincidence or an accident. Many preachers over the years have preached on this text for weddings and lauded the way Jesus thought so much of weddings that he would not let the wine run out. This text has very little to do with weddings. Nor did Jesus just stumble into the situation and shake a miracle out of his sleeve.

Read the Old Testament and see how many times God uses marriage as a metaphor for his relationship to us. We are his bride and he is our bridegroom. In fact, there is no closer relationship on earth than the husband/wife relationship. The closest we will ever get, at least in this life, to understanding our relationship with God is to understand our own marriage. Listen to Isaiah.

For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your sons marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

So, Jesus went to a wedding intentionally to teach us something about his relationship to us intentionally. What were we supposed to learn, besides the fact that Jesus can make good wine?

First it was the 3rd day when the wedding took place. Does that ring any bells for anyone? I don't think John recorded that it was the 3rd day just because he wanted to be precise in his reporting. In fact, John is the evangelist who is least concerned about being precise. He is concerned with themes and ideas. It is Mark that has the hang up with being accurate. Of course the wedding happened on the 3rd day because this wedding is to be a sign - a sign of the relationship that is being established on the third day after Jesus was crucified. That's when Jesus fulfilled his marriage vows - you will be my people and I will be your God.

Now a sign for a Christian is not anything magical or mystical. We do not believe in seeing the future or luck or chance. We have confidence only in the will of God. A sign for us is something God uses to help remind us of His truths that are really bigger than the language we have to describe them.

It is almost impossible to understand how God feels about us, but we remember that feeling we got in the pit of our stomachs when we fell hopelessly in love. Everyone who has fallen in love, knows how wonderful and how terrible it is all at the same time. And we hope for everyone that the fulfillment - the completion of that love happens on the wedding day.

So the wedding reception is going on and they run out of wine. Wine for the Hebrews is the elixir of life. Wine is not “just something to drink.” Wine is representative of everything good and beautiful in the world and the better the wine the better the representation. So if the wedding is our relationship with God and the wine runs out, this is a very bad thing. Not to worry because Mother Mary knows what to do. She knows that it is Jesus who keeps the wine flowing in our marriage to God and so she goes to him and once.

He worked her faith a little. He reminded her that it was he who was steering this ship and not her, but in the end, she gave the faithful answer. “Do whatever he tells you.” Now that is the final answer. If only we could get to it sooner. Mary gives us the answer to the mystery of life right here. Just do whatever Jesus says and stop questioning, arguing and trying to do it yourself.

There were six stone jugs. They were used for the Jewish rite of purification. But you can do all the rites you want. The Law cannot purify us. The Law can only accuse us. No matter how well you use the water, it is still only water and water is not wine. You can follow the rules. You can live an outwardly righteous life. You can judge everyone who fails to live up to your standards and you can condemn anyone who is off track and guess what? You’re still drinking nothing

but water because the sweet wine of the Gospel only comes from Jesus.

So then he did it. He took the watery Law and he fulfilled it. He kept it perfectly and he created wine like no one had ever tasted.

Everything is new now! The old has passed away. The law is fulfilled and the wine of the Gospel flows over us. You and I don't have to hold onto old grudges, bad memories, righteous or unrighteous anger – why would we drink old stale water that's been sitting around in the heat of the sun in stone jugs when we could drink the sweet wine of the Gospel. We can forgive. We can make Godly choices. We can bathe in Baptismal waters and freely consume the body and blood of Christ and in so doing we can grow ever closer to God until the day we get to meet him face to face. AMEN.