

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

January 20th, 2019

Pastor Matthew Ude

John 2:1-11 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." ⁴ Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*." ⁶ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*. ⁹ When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" ¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

I believe in Jesus Christ his only son our lord who was conceived by the holy ghost, born of the virgin Mary, changed water into wine, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, died and was buried . . .

What did we learn last week? That the Ten Commandments are not what is really important. You can learn how to be a good person in Hinduism, or in Confucianism, or even in your middle school morality class. We don't need "life lessons" we need Christ.

As Paul reminds us the law is there just to lead us to Christ. The Ten Commandments are not what matter, what matters is Christ and who he is and what he has done for us.

What matters is that Christ stood in the river was baptized for our sins and received from the Father the proclamation, "This is my beloved Son."

What matters is that Jesus came to the wedding feast and changed water into wine. This truth doesn't teach us some big life lesson that we can use as a ten point step towards a better life. It does however reveal to us that Christ is something utterly and entirely different than what we would expect. It does change our life not because of what we do but because of what Christ does for us and who he is.

I believe that Jesus changed water into wine. Because he did this, I know that he is my gracious and loving savior. Because he did this I know he wants to fill my life with every blessing. Because He did this I know that He is leading and guiding me every day of my life, and whatever happens He will prepare me for the tasks He has given me to do. I believe that Jesus changed water into wine and this makes all the difference in my life.

I believe that Jesus changed water into wine and because of this I know that He is a compassionate and loving Savior who will listen to my every need.

Jesus apparently rebukes Mary. We will probably never understand exactly what he was saying to Mary here. There is obviously some history between Mary and Jesus that we just don't fully understand. But what is clear is that Jesus has work to do, he didn't come to supply wine to wedding parties and Mary needs to understand that.

He does answer Mary's request. This is the same dichotomy that we find throughout scripture. Jesus encourages us to come to him with every request. But at the same time Jesus is not a genie. He isn't going to give us our every desire. His kingdom always comes first.

Even though it isn't the right time, even though it isn't really his concern, even though it is something really unimportant, nevertheless because Mary asks Jesus gives.

We don't have to be in mortal danger. It doesn't have to be a necessity of life. It doesn't have to be some great and grand and altruistic purpose.

In this account we find a savior who cares about our everyday desires and needs but will always keep his kingdom first.

We can also see Mary as an example of faith and prayer. See how great Mary's faith is that even after Jesus rebukes her she trusts him completely. She says to the servants whatever he says to you do it. Then she walks away. Having put the requests in Jesus' care she is completely confident that he will take care of it.

Jesus will listen to our each and every prayer whether we have small faith or great. He does not listen or answer based upon our faith or our works. But learning to pray like Mary takes great faith. Because even when rebuked she absolutely trusts Jesus.

I believe that Jesus changed water into wine, and because of this I know that he gives and he gives generously.

Strauss rejects this account as a latter addition to the Gospel because, "such enjoyment would be utterly unworthy of Jesus." Many people have a tendency to assume the more "holy" you are the more strict and severe you are. The most holy people would live in caves and eat only grain and never have any fun at all.

And so Straus thinks, Jesus couldn't possibly have wasted time at a wedding party, much less encouraged people to drink wine. Strauss has an idea of who Jesus is and rejects that which doesn't fit his predetermined ideas. We come to scripture and there learn who Jesus is not the other way around.

But scripture teaches us differently. God created all things in heaven and earth for our enjoyment. He could have made us like cows so that all we eat every day is grass. But instead he gave us every plant that bears fruit and every living thing as food, and so many more things to fill our lives with beauty and enjoyment.

This is what he does in this account as well. He doesn't just give them what they need but 120 gallons of the very best wine. He gives and he gives generously.

He doesn't want us to abuse or waste what he has given to us. He wants us to be responsible and sober minded. He wants us to understand when it is time to rejoice and when it is time to work. He does not want us to use his gifts in a way that will hurt or harm ourselves or our neighbor. We shouldn't be like the Greeks and Romans who would eat and then go cause themselves to throw up so that they could come and eat more. We shouldn't misuse or abuse alcohol.

Yet Jesus has given us in abundance and wants us to enjoy and rejoice in his gifts, provided we do so responsibly. He is a Savior that gives generously.

I believe that Jesus changed water into wine therefore I know he is the good shepherd who will lead me all the days of my life, prepare me for every challenge and stand by me in all difficulties.

Finally he is preparing his disciples for the difficult task ahead of them.

John says, "this first of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and his disciples believed on him."

John was one of these disciples, he is speaking about himself. I saw this, he is saying, and when I saw it I knew that Jesus was the Messiah.

Other than John there were at least four more and possibly five more, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael and possibly John's brother James. Five or six in total depending on whether James was there or not. These men were about to face a very difficult challenge. Jesus would very soon go up to Jerusalem and overturn the money changers. And Jesus would ask the disciples to stand by him as He did that. He would publicly challenge the authority of the high priest himself and ask the disciples to stand by his side. They would have to turn against everything they had been taught to respect and obey since they were wee little ones.

Jesus would not have them fail so soon in their faith. He would prepare them for this difficult task.

So also he is our Good shepherd who is always leading and preparing us for the difficult tasks ahead of us.

I know that Jesus changed water into wine and because of this I know that He will hear all my prayers, that he will bless my life with all good things, that he will be with me prepare me and stand by my side through all the challenges of life.

Amen

Children's sermon – what did you get for Christmas? For your birthday? What did you ask for? Are these things really necessary? Why did your parents get you these things if they are not essential? Jesus is the same way he gives us many things that we don't really need just because it we ask, just because it is important to us