

The Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 17, 2016

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you gave your one and only Son to be the light of the world. Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and believed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia! He said to me, "You are my servant in whom I will display my splendor." Alleluia! (Isaiah 49:3)

Sermon Text: John 2:1-11

Have you ever noticed that we cover ages 0 through 30 of Jesus' life in just a matter of weeks? About a month ago we celebrated the birth of Jesus. You hear about a census being taken of the entire Roman world. Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem to register. They arrive there, but find no hotel rooms available. So, they stay overnight, huddled up in an animal stable— and Jesus is born that very night. We cover this days-long journey all on Christmas Eve night.

Later, you hear about a group of wise men travelling about 700 miles to meet Jesus. Sometime after their visit, Joseph moves his family out of Bethlehem to Egypt and then to Nazareth. Years pass by, and soon we see twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple listening to and questioning religious teachers. We spend two Sundays to cover at least twelve years of Jesus' life! Then just last week we fast-forwarded to the baptism of 30-year-old Jesus!

I mean, in just four weeks we cover about 30-years of Jesus' life! (To put that into perspective, we will spend the next five months covering just his next three years!). To be honest, the Bible does not say much about those 30 years. What we do know is that for 30-

John 2:1-11

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹ This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

years Jesus obeyed his heavenly Father's every command. That is why at his baptism the Father says: "*With him I am well-pleased*" ([Matthew 3:17](#)).

That is why we are in the church-season called "Epiphany." Remember what "Epiphany" means? "Epiphany" means "to reveal." For those 30 years, we do not see too much difference between people and Jesus. We do not see what power he has, what authority he holds, or how he intends to remove our consequences for sin.

Beginning with his baptism, Jesus gradually peels layer after layer about who he is. He shows you what he does to put your heart at rest and bring peace to your mind. **JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY!** *for you to see his power, for you to trust in him.*

John the Baptist shouts that out loud. He knows the Savior has already come; he knows Jesus is walking on the earth. So, he tells people about that. Many quickly take notice. In fact, six of John's followers heard his words and started following Jesus ([John 1:35-42](#)). It takes just three days for those disciples to see exactly who they are following.

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." Running out of wine would be no big deal if it were not for the fact that Jewish weddings lasted for seven days. Each day the wedding host was expected to serve food and beverages.

Mary was related to the married couple in some way— and so she served as a kind of host. The catering company would approach her with any questions. Yet, the caterers really do not have a question to ask her, instead they have more of a problem: the wine ran out. What do you do? Do you stand up at the microphone and tell your to go home early because you ran out? That would be embarrassing! People would remember your wedding for all the wrong reasons! You would look like a host who does not care enough about their guests!

Yet, no one ever publicly announces the wine-shortage. Did you notice that? No one tells the guests to go home early. The wine runs out— and the reception continues. What you see is a calm, collected Mary approach Jesus with the problem.

After all, she knows exactly what Jesus is capable of doing; she witnessed the miraculous events surrounding his birth. The angel Gabriel appeared to her with the news that she would have child. Even though she did not know how a virgin could have a baby, she gave birth to Jesus— just as God promised. Shortly after his birth, shepherds and wise men met her child (surely something that does not normally happen unless the family had shepherd or Magi as friends). Before Mary sees any wine appear, she knows that Jesus can help her.

You and I know how this problem is taken care of; our gospel reading says that Jesus turned water into wine. You know, in some regards, you benefit more than Mary. You can read the New Testament and see all those miracles Jesus has done— including this one. You see how **JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY!** *for you to see his power.*

Does that put all fear and anxiety to rest? Do you wake up every day and no longer worry because you know your God has the power to answer your every prayer, to fill every need? Do you make sure never to trust in yourself because you know you do not

need to, because you can trust in your God who will answer in most perfect ways? Do you never find it silly to pray to your Savior because you do know that he hears you? You see Jesus reveal his glory and you see him unveil his power, a power which has no limits in heaven and on earth. So, does that mean you never ever feel afraid and that you never ever feel ashamed praying to Jesus for help?

We still wrestle with that sinful nature every day, do we not? A sinful desire within that wants nothing more than for you to rely on yourself. Every day, every challenge you face a little voice in the back of the head says: "You do not need God. You have yourself. You can figure out your problem on your own." That voice points to your degree hanging on the wall, to the education you have, to the street smarts you have learned, and says that you have no reason to take your troubles to God because you are more than able to figure out life's problems on your own.

If that voice goes unattended very soon you hear something even scarier— a voice that says you do not need God because you are god. You have the power to face any problem head on. You are more reliable to trust than God. You alone are able to make your life perfectly good.

For this reason, **JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY** *for you to see his power!* **Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine.** Do you see what kind of Savior you have? Your Jesus has power over the elements of the earth. Changing water into wine is effortless; he could handle this wine-shortage. **JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY!** *for you to see his power.*

That is why the apostle John records this first miracle. Yet, did you catch the word he uses? He does not call it just a "miracle;" he calls it a "sign." Jesus is not performing a magic tricks. He is not out to demonstrate dominance or superiority. This powerful sign points you to something deeper than just what you see on the surface. Each miracle points out a Savior who loves you so deeply, that he cares not only about your earthly troubles, but also about your great spiritual need.

Your Savior has a perfect trust in God. In fact, he trusts God's every command, knowing that his Word safely guides his life. Even when Jesus walks to the cross, even though he is crucified as an innocent man, even though Jesus had every reason to doubt that his God truly watched over him, Jesus trusts in the sure, unseen promises of God.

This is who your Savior is. Your Savior reveals his perfection to you. His miraculous sign lifts up your eyes to the cross, where you see him take on your sins of mistrust and is punished as if he never trusted in his God. Yet, the God-man who has the power to change water into wine has the power to lay down his life and take it up again. The God-man who has the power to change water into wine has the power to raise you up on the Last Day. **JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY** *for you to trust in him.*

As you read through this miracle at a wedding account, have you ever considered what must have crossed the minds of those wedding attendants? They follow Jesus'

instructions. They fill the jars with water and bring some of that water to the head waiter. What are they going to do with that? Serve water? Hope no one notices a difference between wine and water? Yet, when the headwaiter tastes wine from the jars of water, **[he] did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew.**

Can you imagine the reaction of those wedding attendants? Can you just see their eyes grow wide, their jaws drop, and their minds spin around? Do you think they slowly turned their head in wonder to look Jesus over again?

We know how the disciples acted; **[they] put their faith in him. JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY for you to trust in him.**

As you hear this changing water into wine miracle again, focus not only on the wonder and amazement. Stop and remember just what kind of God you have.

You have a God who hears your every prayer and request and plea. Jesus heard Mary's request to help in the wine-shortage. When the time was right, he revealed his power over water. Your God continues holding more power over your world and climate than any meteorologist or scientist might claim to have. Your God provides a planet for you to breathe on, to eat from, to live through the seasons. His gives you the privilege and opportunity to ask him to continue protecting our planet and to use you as caretakers of his creation.

Your God gives a perfect response. Mary expected Jesus to perform a miracle immediately for all to see. Yet, our thoughts are not God's thoughts nor are our ways his ways ([Isaiah 55:8-10](#)). When his timing was right, Jesus answered her request. When his timing is right, Jesus answers you in ways to deepen your trust in him. No matter what you are going through or what you might fear, know that your God knows the present and the future. He holds power over all things in heaven and on earth. Like the disciples, you too continue to putting your trust in his guidance.

You have a God who does what is humanly impossible. We cannot make water into wine, but Jesus can. Because Jesus can change one thing into another, be comforted in knowing that Jesus can change your troubles into joys— even in the most miraculous of ways. Bring your great big problems to him; trust Jesus to answer them. Bring fearful doubts to your God; trust that he does have the power to do what he knows is best for you.

Finally, you see a God who lavishes perfect blessings on you. Jesus changed the water into wine— even though he was the invited guest. He made not just a little wine, but a lot of wine (maybe even a surplus, depending on when the wedding would end). You have a God who not only answers your specific requests, but also showers, lavishes many more blessings which may not have asked for. **JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY for you to trust in him.**

Right now we are in the church-season called "Epiphany." For 30 years of Jesus' life we do not see how he is different from the rest of us. We do not see what power he has, or what authority he holds, or how he intends to remove our consequences for sin.

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