

## All Is in the Water

Texts: Isaiah 62:1-5

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (Series C. Epiphany 2) Ps.36:5-10

John 2:1-11

*Jesus performed this first miracle in Cana in Galilee; there he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.*

Prayer:

Most of us have stories to tell about weddings. There was the groom whose car broke down on the main road on his way to the church, none of the passing vehicles stopped to pick him up. It was a hot summer's day. He was quite a sight walking into the church with his coat, shirt and tie dangled over his shoulder. He was relieved that he had made it just on time. The service got under way and no sooner had we started than he passed out, and had to be taken out.

And there was the bride who was two and half hours late because she was delayed by the hair dresser. You can imagine how frantic the groom was waiting at the church as I tried calm him down.

Today we heard about a wedding that Jesus, his mother Mary, and the disciples attended. And what a story! If ever there was a wedding story that would have been repeated again and again, it was this one.

Weddings back in Jesus' time were happy occasions just as they are today. They celebrated the fact that a *new home*, a *new family*, was being created. There were speeches and toasts; procession to the bride's house and then to the groom's where the celebrations took place that could last up to a week. There needed to be plenty of food and drink, especially wine. It was possible that unexpected guests would arrive and these would be welcomed and given food and drink.

Everyone was having a marvelous time when the wine ran out. This was a crisis. If the food and wine gave out then the celebrations were incomplete. The bridegroom was disgraced. People would talk about this for a long time to come.

It really was a big deal in that culture if you ran out food and drink on such a great occasion. So as the celebration was going on in this case, they ran out wine mother Mary, approached her son, Jesus for help. Jesus agrees after a little bit persuasion. He sees six stone jars standing in the house – each holding about 100 litres. They normally contained water for ritual washing.

After little discussion with mother Mary, Jesus ordered that these pots be filled to the brim and then some of the water then be taken to the person in charge of the wedding celebrations. The water had become wine - the best vintage wine that the MC had ever tasted. (*This brings me to story about a Catholic Priest who was pulled over by police office with wine bottle in his hands*).

Notice the simplicity of what happens here, how easily, how quietly, with no fuss. Jesus says simply, *"Fill these jars with water."* And after they had been filled he said, *"Now draw some out, and take it to the man in charge of the feast."*

There was no prayer, no word of command, no shouting, no speaking in tongues, no laying on of hands, no looking up to heaven - nothing. He didn't even touch the water. He didn't even taste it afterward to see if it had really turned into wine. He simply said, *"Take it to the man in charge of the feast."* The water simply became wine.

What is John's purpose in including this story in his narrative of Jesus' life? John tells us that this is a sign. John writes, *"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"* (John 2:11 NIV). John calls each of the miracles in his Gospel a **"sign"**.

A sign points us in a certain direction or gives us a deeper meaning to something we are looking at. Signs give information sometimes that information is of dubious value. A sign above a Laundromat washing machine: *Automatic washing machines. Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.* A sign in the men's washroom: *Toilet out of order. Please use the one on the right etc.*

Then there is the problem of a lack of signs. I'm sure you have become frustrated as I have, when you want to find out what street you are traveling on, or where to turn off, or in what direction a particular town is located and there are no signs.

John's Gospel has *signs* – *signs* that give us information about Jesus. John uses the miracles as *signs* to tell us deeper truths about Jesus. In Matthew, Mark and Luke we find the parables, the stories that Jesus told like woman who lost a coin, or the son who rebelled and left home.

These stories give us an insight into the deeper truths that Jesus taught. However, John uses the miracles of Jesus as parables. John records, "*This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee*" (John 2:11).

For John the miracle is **a sign** pointing to something far more important. This sign teaches us, reveals to us, something about Jesus' divine nature as well as the unique relationship between him and his heavenly Father.

Jesus isn't just a new prophet from the back woods of Nazareth who could dazzle a crowd with his spectacular powers. He is the Son of God. (See John 14:1: "*Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves*" NIV).

These *signs* tell us that Jesus is God doing the works of God so that we might believe and have faith. After the miracle at the wedding, we are told that "*his disciples put their faith in him*". Near the end of what John has to say about Jesus in his Gospel he wrote,

*"In his disciples' presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life"* (John 20:30,31).

In other words, John has written down these miracles with the specific purpose of *pointing us* to Jesus as our Saviour. He isn't interested in writing a history about Jesus, or telling us what a wonderful person Jesus was to help the bride and groom at Cana, or display of his supernatural powers.

If Jonah came out of the belly of a whale alive, Daniel came out of the lion's den, and Lazarus out of the tomb, If Jesus could change water into wine, you and I will also come out of any situation we find ourselves. Is Jesus able to fill your jar, my jar with his glory, mercy, and grace.

These miracles are retold so that we might have faith and believe that Jesus is our Saviour, that he is truly God's Son, and that through him and only through him is there the possibility that we might have forgiveness and eternal life. These signs point ahead to Jesus' future glory that will shine from the cross and the empty tomb on Easter morning.

His death and resurrection are clear **signs**. Jesus Christ is saying that through his death and resurrection people will be able to see clearly that he is God come to earth to bring us wholeness, forgiveness and eternal life. All will be able to see that Jesus has come to save us all.

It will be clear that he is the way of salvation as he said on so many occasions, "*I am the way, the truth and the life, no one goes to the Father except by me*" and "*Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness*" (John 14:6, 8:12). Plenty of people saw Jesus' miracles and were indeed impressed by what he was able to do but not everyone believed in him as it is today.

We are told at the end of the reading today, "*He revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him*". Notice that the two go together. The signs reveal his glory to those who believe in him. Jesus, glory is seen always through the eyes of faith. Plenty of people saw the signs, but only those with faith recognized them for what they were.

Let me finish by reminding us that the reason John has written this is so that we may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing we may have life in his name. These miracles are *signs* that are understood in the light of faith in Jesus and that at the same time bring faith in Jesus.

The question for us this morning as we read this account along with the others in this gospel is, do we believe in Jesus? If yes, how does that belief have an impact on our relationship with others? Do we believe that Jesus coming has provided the effective remedy for sins and its consequences?

Or do we say thanks, but no I can do it on my own kind of. Do we believe that Jesus is the one sent by God to be the Messiah, the Saviour of the world? Or do need to keep searching?

Here we are at the wedding party with all we need through the gifts of the Spirit and our faith, so we can, as mother Mary directed, do all that He tells us. How? By remembering to Love our God with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and to love our neighbors as, in the same way that, we love ourselves.

This well-known miracle of changing water into wine is more than just a miracle. It's ***a pointer, a sign***, to the deeper truth of who Jesus is, that Jesus can be trusted, of the glory he reveals to those who believe in him. These things are written so that you and I may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. **Amen.**

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