

John 2:1-11

Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there.² Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.

³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine."

⁴Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet."

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

⁶Six stone water jars, which the Jews used for ceremonial cleansing, were standing there, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. ⁸Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." And they did.

⁹When the master of the banquet tasted the water that had now become wine, he did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew). The master of the banquet called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!"

¹¹This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Glimpse of Glory

I.

"The food is fit for human consumption."

There was a master of ceremonies at the wedding at Cana. He was more than the DJ standing over by the sound system preparing to announce the entrance of the wedding party, or to blast out some catchy tune for the bridal couple's dance. He actually sampled the food and drink before it was served to those at the banquet. It was necessary, therefore, for the servants at the banquet to approach his table with the contents from the huge stone jars.

Only the servants knew where this liquid had come from. Minutes before they had drawn water out of the well to fill those very jars that usually held water that was to be used for ceremonial washing. They knew there had been no squeezing of grapes. There had been no careful crafting to make a nice wine. There had been no time for fermentation—it had been only minutes before, after all.

Jesus told them to take some of what they knew had been only water to his table. One servant approached with the decanter. The curiosity of several others probably got the best of them and they all clustered around to see what might happen.

Perhaps the tasting happened much like the movies. There were no long-stemmed wine glasses, I'm sure, but the process was probably much the same as wine tasting today. Peering into the cup, the master of ceremonies tried to discern the color and clarity of the wine. A gentle swirl exposes the wine to a larger surface area. Nose close to the lip he sniffs inquisitively; several sniffs, perhaps, to discern the complexity of the bouquet. Then a sip. The tip of the tongue testing the sweetness, the sides of the tongue registering the acidity and saltiness, the back of the tongue noting the alcohol. Finally, he would swallow a tiny sip to note the aftertaste, or finish, of the wine.

Slowly he pondered what he had just tasted. His was the most sophisticated palate at the banquet. The servants watched carefully. Would any hint of what he had tasted register on his face? "The master of the banquet called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, 'Everyone

serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!” (John 2:9-10, EHV).

II.

Wedding feasts lasted about a week in those days. Wine was important. It was more than just a festive beverage, it was a staple for meals. Wine at a feast such as this was a symbol of God’s grace; it signified joy and abundant blessings and even hope for the future.

“When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no wine.”” (John 2:3, EHV). Mary was mortified when she learned of the problem. Relatives and friends of the couple had come from near and far to celebrate the occasion. Had there been poor planning? Were there more guests than expected?

The reason for the lack wasn’t important. Mary knew who could solve it. John reports: “This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee” (John 2:11, EHV). John’s statement would seem to indicate that Mary hadn’t seen Jesus perform a miracle yet, but she had “...treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19, EHV). So we were told of the events of Jesus’ birth. Twelve years later, at the temple, we hear yet again: “His mother treasured up all these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51, EHV).

Mary had been paying attention for many years. She never stopped treasuring these things in her heart and pondering them. She knew who Jesus was. She believed that he was the One who had been sent from God.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet’” (John 2:4, EHV). It seems rather curt, even harsh, to our ears, for Jesus to speak this way to his mother. Yet he was not speaking as a son, but as her Savior. He was being formal and polite. Just as he said in the temple at age 12, he was going about his Heavenly Father’s business. The timing for things was in the Father’s hands, not Mary’s—not even his own.

“His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you’” (John 2:5, EHV). Mary understood the context of his answer. Did she know that he *would* do something? One thing Mary knew for sure—Jesus would do what was right. He always did. She knew he always would. Whatever he decided would be the correct decision. You servants, if he tells you to do something, don’t ask questions, just do it.

III.

Perhaps sometimes *you* cry out to God, but it feels like he doesn’t hear or isn’t going to answer. Maybe sometimes you feel like King David in Psalm 13: “How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” (Psalm 13:1, EHV). Perhaps you feel like the disciples out on the boat in a storm, with Jesus sleeping calmly in the back of the boat: “Teacher, don’t you care that we are about to drown?”” (Mark 4:38, EHV). Maybe you feel like Paul: “I was given a thorn in my flesh... ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that he would take it away from me” (2 Corinthians 12:9, EHV).

It may *seem* sometimes that your prayers aren’t heard or that they aren’t being answered by God. Paul got a very specific answer: “[the Lord] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Corinthians 12:9, EHV). In Paul’s case, God didn’t answer the way Paul might have *liked*, but Paul was encouraged to go about his business trusting in the Lord to guide him and go with him. Most of us won’t get such a direct answer from God, but we can be sure that God has heard our prayers and will answer in his own way and in his own time. Perhaps his answer won’t be the one we want to hear, but he will be with us and take care of us.

IV.

Today's text started this way: "Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding" (John 2:1-2, EHV). What had happened just days before this was that Jesus called his first disciples. Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathaniel had begun to follow Jesus. Jesus promised that they would see great things.

"My time has not come yet" (John 2:4, EHV). The ministry period of Jesus' life was just beginning. There was much to be fulfilled and much to be done before the sacrifice for sins would take place. Those few disciples had to be supplemented with some more. All twelve of the close-knit group he would choose needed to be taught. Their understanding would be incomplete—one could say it would be inadequate—even when the time *did* come for him to allow his execution for the sins of the world. By that time, however, they would have rudimentary knowledge that could be expanded so that they would understand and become the messengers of his saving gospel.

That time was still three years away. It *was* time, however, for these disciples to get their first glimpse of his glory.

Servants were sent scurrying on their errand to fill the six stone jars with water: "...each holding twenty or thirty gallons" (John 2:6, EHV). At least 120 gallons of water were drawn from the well to fill the stone jars.

"The wine is fit for human consumption." We've already watched the master of ceremonies go through the process to pronounce this wine excellent—beyond anything that had yet been served at the banquet.

The educational process had begun. The servants knew where the wine had come from. These early disciples knew, too. They watched. They learned their first lesson. "He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11, EHV).

There was no New Testament to record the words and works of Jesus and how he fulfilled all the prophecies concerning the Messiah. The only way they could know was if he would give them a sign; the only way was for him to reveal to them glimpses of his glory. This was just the first of many to come.

They believed. They didn't understand it all, yet, but they believed. Even after they saw so many things they still wouldn't understand that he had to suffer and die for the sins of the world, or that he would raise himself back to life on the third day as proof that he had, indeed, completed the work his Heavenly Father had set forth for him. But eventually they would see it all.

"The food is fit for human consumption." Those of you who were officers or NCOs in our nation's military might recognize the phrase, or something similar to it. That phrase, or something very similar, can be heard at a very formal military dinner called a "Dining-In." Before anyone else is allowed to sample the food, the designated person must first taste it and make the declaration. Only then can the others present begin to sample their meals.

The master of ceremonies declared the wine at Cana fit for human consumption. The disciples watched and learned and grew in their understanding of Jesus and what he did for every human being. They would write down everything necessary for us to learn these same important truths. What Jesus has done for us is fit for human consumption. Far beyond that, what Jesus has done for us is fit to bring us to the eternal wedding banquet in heaven. There we will see Jesus with our eyes, not just the eyes of faith. Until then, dine on the eternal banquet of his Word and Sacraments, given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of your sins. Amen.