



Sermon

Epiphany – Wedding at Cana

John 2:1-11

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This is the week after the second Sunday of Epiphany. You will recall that Epiphany means revealing. It is the season when we celebrate the revealing of Christ to the world.

From the earliest days, the Eastern church kept January 6th as the Festival of the Epiphany. They read the nativity of Jesus, the coming of the wise men, the baptism of Jesus, and the miracle at Cana.

In these accounts Jesus is initially revealed:

- to the Jewish shepherds – angels announced the birth of Messiah and gave glory to God.
- to the gentile Magi, who had been led to him by a star and dreams and worshipped him with great joy;
- to Israel at his baptism when the voice of God was heard declaring his identity and the Holy Spirit was seen to descend on him like a dove.
- To Israel as this sign was enacted – a creative miracle in the context of a wedding feast – a picture of great Wedding feast of the Son of God.

John gospel is deliberately arranged to record miraculous signs.

John 20:30-31 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

These Signs are:

1. Changing water into wine at Cana in John 2:1-11 - "the first of the signs"
2. Healing the royal official's son in Capernaum in John 4:46-54
3. Healing the paralytic at Bethesda in John 5:1-15
4. Feeding the 5000 in John 6:5-14
5. Jesus walking on water in John 6:16-24
6. Healing the man blind from birth in John 9:1-7
7. The raising of Lazarus in John 11:1-45

One of the titles of the Messiah is the Bridegroom. The people of God are corporately the bride and he is the bridegroom. Here, Jesus attends and blesses a wedding. Here there is a pre-figuring of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Here a creative miracle was wrought where water was turned into wine and not any wine but good quality. And not a small amount but those six purification jars held about 450 litres or 100 gallons of liquid.

Isaiah 55 reads

Isaiah 55:1-6 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. ² Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. ³ Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. ⁴ See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. ⁵ Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour." ⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

Did you hear the reference to wine without price – the richest of fare? The promise of an everlasting covenant promised to David – that is the covenant of the Messiah. He is to be a witness to the people, a leader. Nations ie gentiles will come to him. It is all very relevant it is a sign full of significance as a marker of the Messiah.

However, I want to focus on several particular points.

Jesus, his mother and his disciples are guests at the village wedding. The wine ran out and Mary tells Jesus. He initially distanced himself: "Why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

She simply tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." This may be an abbreviated account, somehow she knew he would act and tells the servants to obey him – and they would need some reassurance to ladle water out of the purification jars and offer it to the steward.

Those words of Mary are good for us to take to heart: Do whatever he tells you. When we deal with God who is able to act outside the normal constraints of life, what he asks us to do may not make sense naturally. Do whatever he tells you – so that his divine interventions can take place. We need to obey him because he is Lord. We need to obey him because he is doing greater things than we can understand.

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.

John tells us that in this miracle, Jesus gave a sign of who he was. Who else but God can turn water into wine? It is not a minor fix, it is creative. It is a sign that God is at work in Jesus and indeed is present in him. In this miracle, Jesus revealed his glory.

Have you known in some way, some event, some answer to prayer, some revelation the glory of God being revealed to you? It will only be partial because we could not stand the full unrestrained glory of God. Remember Moses asked to see God's glory.

Exodus 33:19-23 ¹⁹ The LORD replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, Yahweh, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose. ²⁰ But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live." ²¹ The LORD continued, "Look, stand near me on this rock. ²² As my glorious presence passes by, I will hide you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and let you see me from behind. But my face will not be seen."

Have you had an inkling of God's glory?

The third point is that Jesus' disciples put their faith in him. They saw his glory in this miracle and they believed. From the other gospels it seems their faith was slow developing. However, this was a significant step for them – they believed in him.

Have you seen his glory? Have you believed in him? Will you do what he tells you to do?