

**Sermon on John 2:1-12 for 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany 1.20.19**  
**St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church – New Ulm, MN – Pastor Nate Scharf**

How often hasn't Jesus filled a need in our lives, even before we asked? And when we have asked, how often hasn't he answered in a way that was better than the solution we had asked for? You and I both know needs will come and go, but the one who answers is the same. **Jesus is God and Jesus cares.**

In Jesus' day wedding ceremonies began with a procession from the bride's home with her family. They escorted her to the home her groom had been prepared for her. Other ceremonies and traditions followed. Then they celebrated. The celebration could last a day or even a couple weeks. I suppose all of that depended on the time they had available, who was able to be there, the financial disposition of the couple and other factors. There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was invited. So was Jesus, and even his new disciples. Was this a friend or relative? We don't know, but close enough to be invited with a few add-ons.

Wine was a regular drink of the middle eastern diet. And at this wedding a problem arose when the wine ran out. Maybe they couldn't afford enough. Maybe they had enough money, but Cana-mart or Galilee wholesale delivered only half the order. Jesus' mother was in the know enough to know there was "no more wine." And she brought that problem to Jesus. "They have no more wine." Implied is a plea for help, but she doesn't dictate what that might be. She simply presents the problem to Jesus. What a way to pray! Bring the problem to Jesus and trust that he can and will help in the best way, maybe even a way you couldn't even imagine.

"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." Jesus was not being sassy to his mother. He had utmost respect for his parents. Scripture tells us he was "obedient to them." Remember when he said to mom and dad in the temple, "I had to be about my Father's business." He makes clear he is on his heavenly Father's time table. His baptism has taken place. The Father spoke his approval, "This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased." The Spirit descended on his shoulder in the form of a dove. John the Baptizer pointed his disciples to him saying, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Jesus gathered disciples. His ministry had begun. The need arises. Jesus' mother makes request. Jesus will only do the will of God. Jesus' mother said to the servants (maybe family friends who were helping out, maybe hired help), "Do whatever he tells you." This is also good advice for us.

Nobody wants to run to the well or the store during a wedding reception. You have supplies on hand. Six large stone water jars were there. Picture them waist high and able to hold 20-30 gallons. Picture a gallon of milk or water. Now 30 of those in a big stone jar. The Jewish traditions included purification rites where you poured water on the outside of your hands, or dipped bowls or utensils, or sprinkled water on things to purify them ceremonially. Anyways, they were there. *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."*

Bring me your finest water, please. No. The master would be looking for wine, not water. Yet the servants listen to Jesus. What miracle had he done that they could trust him in this? Yet when the master tasted the water, he didn't taste nothing. Instead he tasted wine. And not just some Kool-Aid packet from Nazareth that Jesus had snuck into the jars. The master didn't know where it came from, so he calls the groom aside during the celebration and kind of chides him. *"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."* That is common practice even today 2000 years later. Realize Jesus' wine was of such quality that it made the groom's good wine seem like the cheap stuff. Jesus filled their need perfectly and in great abundance with a miracle.

All of Jesus' miracles show us at least two things. First, that **Jesus is God**, true God in the flesh. The ordinary looking rabbi from Nazareth who grew up in a carpenter's home is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament Messianic prophecies. He is the real deal. *"What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him."* The miracles were meant to bolster the faith of the believing as they do still today – strengthening our faith in him. The second is that **Jesus cares**. Jesus' miracles always answer a prayer and fill a need whether that's filling your cup with something good to drink or raising your dead son outside the city of Nain. **Jesus is God. Jesus cares.**

**Jesus is God and Jesus cares.** So is Jesus your only God? And do you trust that Jesus cares? Yes. And Yes. Right. Amen. Good to go. Let's go home. It's not that easy is it? Jesus' disciple Judas let greed and covetousness be his gods even as he followed the one true God. He betrayed Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane with a kiss. Peter let fear take first in his heart even though he followed the Almighty Creator. Peter denied Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest. The disciples who followed so closely in Cana fled at Gethsemane even

after all Jesus' miracles and teachings and power. Jesus was all alone. Do we do better?

Who or what has first place in your heart? Isn't it often – you? Aren't our best efforts reserved for filling our own cups with earthly happiness? It's part of the reason we complain so much when we don't get what we want. "Life is hard. Don't get paid enough. Don't have what everyone else seems to have in spades." Our highest priority becomes our own happiness and often at the expense of others. Why do we lash out with our words to bring others down or spread some juicy story that does not protect our neighbor's reputation? We have unwholesome desires and pursue them. We have good desires but go outside of God's will and commands to try to satisfy them, but it often leaves us empty or clamoring for more and more. And how many others are hurt?

Jesus attended a marriage and blessed it with his presence. How have we treated marriage at St. Paul's here? For those who are married – have we been faithful to our vows to love and cherish our spouse? Or are we indifferent to them, even loveless to them at times, or disrespect them in private or public. For those who are not married – do we steal the blessings of marriage and take a holy good thing and use it for selfish purposes in thought, word and deed claiming every wise sounding excuse when a friend confronts us or a preacher mentions it, or our conscience accuses us? We could go on, but I ask you, do we always keep God first in our hearts? No. Do we always trust that he cares for us? Not when we think he's holding out on us or keeping us from being happy. We are not worthy of him. He should have no time for us sinners.

Jesus said to his mother at a wedding reception, "*My hour has not yet come.*" Three years later at another feast – the Passover meal in the upper room, John records, "*It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.*" Yet he loves us. The Father filled Jesus' cup that night. It was not delicious wine, but the cup of suffering and hell you and I justly deserve for our sins. Jesus looked toward heaven and said, "*Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.*" On the cross Jesus drank the cup of suffering God had prepared for you and me. He cried out, "*My God, My God why have you forsaken me.*" And when it was done, he rallied his strength and said, "*It is finished.*" He hung his head and died.

Three days later Jesus rose from the dead. Still true God. Still in the flesh – except now his body was glorified but still bears the marks of his love for us. With this miracle he gives us reason to put out trust in him alone, and to know our

forgiveness in him. Once more he shows us his love. In the Sacrament he fills our cup with his own blood in with and under the wine and gives it to us to drink along with his body to eat with the bread for our forgiveness. He richly and daily supplies all we need so that we can be generous on every occasion toward him and others. He gives us time and energy to follow him, to seek him in his Word, to learn from him and live for him. He gives us a rich measure of his forgiveness, power and love to fight the temptations that face us and silence the voices that condemn us.

Jesus changed water into wine at Cana. What a wedding! What a Savior! *“What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”* And so do we. The needs will come and go in our lives, but the one who answers is the same. **Jesus is God. Jesus cares.** Amen.