

January 16, 2022

Texts: Isaiah 62: 1-5; John 2: 1-11

Title: "God at the Wedding at Cana"

One of the more stressful occupations, according to what I read, is one that you might never have thought as being stressful, a wedding planner. Any of you ever worked as a wedding planner? Wedding planners juggle hundreds of tiny details while also managing the emotions of the wedding party. Their job is to create the perfect day for the bride and groom. That's a huge responsibility! And that's because there are a lot of things that can come up at the last minute. It's up to the wedding planner to resolve these things. For example, the DJ doesn't show up for the reception. What do you do? I read about one wedding planner that hooked up her phone to a laptop and became the DJ so the wedding party could go on as planned. You get the idea.

This morning, in the gospel of John, we read about a wedding planner faced with a crisis. Jesus and his disciples and his mother are attending a wedding in Cana. In that culture, wedding parties lasted for days. At some point during the festivities, the host family ran out of wine. Jesus lived in a culture that valued hospitality. No more wine meant no more celebration, which would be humiliating for the bride and groom's families.

This passage is a great example of what I would call mom-power. Mary didn't ask Jesus directly to do anything. She didn't demand. She just presented the problem to him in such a way that he couldn't say, "No." That's mom-power.

Now Jesus can do miracles. He could have made wine appear out of nothing in

the blink of an eye. But that's not how he did it. He involved others in rescuing the situation. This story made me remember a news report that I saw.

In March 2020, a small Italian town experienced a "miracle". A local winery had a valve fail on its bottling line. The pressure created by the leaky valve forced wine into the area water pipes. Red wine started to flow out of the water taps in about 20 homes surrounding the winery. And it flowed for about three hours, until they were able to fix the leaky valve.

Can you imagine wine pouring out of your kitchen faucet? Jesus could have provided wine for every household in town. But if you read through the Bible, God often asks others to assist in His work. But God chooses those who trust Him. It always requires an attitude of trust, an act of faith, to partner with God in doing His work.

This turning water into wine wasn't just an impressive party trick. At the end we read, "Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him." I call that an important miracle.

The miracles we read about in the Bible aren't just special effects to impress us. Miracles are meant to show us the nature and priorities of God. Every time you read one, ask yourself, "What does this tell me about God?"

**The first thing this story tells us about God is that in Jesus, God is doing a new thing.** Notice in the Bible that every time God speaks to a person, it's a stretching event. It's a challenging event. Read through the Bible. What happened in the lives of Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, Esther, Joseph,

David? Each one of them was called away from a comfortable life to follow God to a new place, to take on new challenges. And God expects the people who follow Him to grow, to change, to rise to new challenges, to sacrifice their comforts for His calling.

Speaking of challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic and how we react to it is a continuing challenge, isn't it. And not just for the church. Nearly everyone has struggled through these times. One way you can deal with a challenging situation is to get down in the dumps and resentful. Or, maybe you can find a better way to deal with your situation.

I read about a husband-and-wife team who when they got bored staring at those same four walls every day, this couple created a website called WindowSwap which allowed users to upload photos or video of the view outside their window. Then, when they got bored with the view from their home, they could click through photos or video of other people's views from around the world. Not a final solution to the problem but a help for people to deal with it. You might say that in Jesus, God opened a "new window" so we could see His nature in a new way. In Jesus, God is doing a new thing.

**The second thing we learn from this miracle is that in Jesus, God is doing an abundant thing.** Jesus turned the water into a lot of wine, and it was the best quality wine. But you know what? It's not about just the wine. The wine is just a prop. It's about God's abundant generosity to us. In Jesus, we see that God's generosity flows from His love for us. We're blessed by His love so we can bless

others. It fits that “pay it forward” idea that we’ve heard so much about in recent years. If you’ve been blessed with God’s abundance in some way, and it doesn’t have to be only money, give it away for the good of others. Give it away.

In John chapter two, we learn that God is doing a new thing and God is doing an abundant thing. **And finally, we learn that in Jesus, God is doing a grace thing.** Grace—unconditional, unearned love—is hidden throughout this Bible passage. You see, Jesus’ first miracle and his last meal have a something in common. Just before Jesus was arrested and crucified, he had a final meal with his disciples. And at that meal he picked up the cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

Jesus, God in the flesh, didn’t come here to save a wedding party from disaster. He came to give His life on the cross to save us from our sins and restore us to himself.

Jesus’ first miracle was to show us that in his coming, in his life and his death for our sake, God was doing a new thing, an abundant thing, and a grace thing. His broken body and the wine of the Lord’s supper are reminders of Christ’s courageous love for us.

Don’t you want to know a God like that? Don’t you want to be a part of His work? Then give your life to Jesus or if you say, “I did that many years ago,” then offer yourself up in a renewed commitment to Him, and see what new things, abundant things and grace-filled things God can do in your life. Amen.