

Pastor Jon's Sermon from Sunday, 2/19/2025. The Wedding at Cana. "God's grace is abundant like the abundance of wine."

Our Gospel for today reminds me of the song signs
Signs, signs, everywhere there's signs

Today we have the first of seven signs in the Gospel of John... Jesus turning water into wine. In John's Gospel, signs are synonymous with the word "miracles". The signs in John's gospel are meant to point beyond themselves to what God is up to in Jesus Christ. The whole purpose of the signs is to get people to believe in Jesus as God's Son and Savior of the world. And when we believe, we have the promise of eternal and abundant life. And remember the word abundance as we travel through this text.

In this season of Epiphany, which means manifestation, we can ask what is being revealed about Jesus? Well, in this first sign, we learn that Jesus cares about the happenings in our daily lives... like at a wedding.

I love the fact that Jesus receives an invitation to a wedding, along with his mother and his disciples, and shows up. And he shows up on the 3rd day, no less. What else happened on the 3rd day? Easter, right? Resurrection. New Life.

You see, weddings lasted about a week in those days. As long as there was food, music, and wine, nobody would be concerned. But if the wine gave out, this would bring public disgrace to the groom and his family. The wine did give out. And Mary, the mother of Jesus, noticed the problem and went to her son, "They have no wine." Jesus responds, "Woman, (which actually wasn't a hostile or rude address in those days), what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." Jesus' hour will be when he reveals his true glory in his death, resurrection, and ascension.

But notice, she never directly asked Jesus to fix the problem, she just notifies him of the problem. This makes me think of prayer. Notifying Jesus of our problems. She then turns to the

servants and says, “Do whatever he tells you.” Mary believed in Jesus and his ability to do something about it. Jesus ultimately listens to his mom and does something about it. He tells the servants to fill up six stone jars with water each holding 20-30 gallons. They complied. This would take some time and effort. They couldn’t just turn on the tap like we do.

Then Jesus told them to draw some water out. It had become wine. And we’re not talkin just any old wine, like Boones Farm, but the best wine. Usually, the best wine comes out first at a wedding and the cheap stuff later. But this was the best for last. The quality and quantity of this wine were spectacular. If you measured it out there were at least 605 bottles of the best wine.

The point of this story really isn’t about wine or weddings for that matter. It is about God’s extravagant abundance. This was way more wine than a first century wedding would ever need. This sign is really a foretaste of the feast to come with Jesus. It does point to Easter. It also points to God’s extravagant grace for us every day of our lives. God’s grace is abundant and excessive. It is a gift that we don’t deserve or can’t ever earn. We receive this grace in the Word and in Holy Communion.

This sign wouldn’t have happened if Jesus wasn’t invited, if Mary didn’t notice the problem and say something about it, and if the servants didn’t follow Jesus’ instructions. The world needs people like you and me to speak up when things aren’t right. Take MLK for example. He used his faith, the scriptures, and God-given gifts to speak up and do justice for black and brown people in America. We too are servants of God called to do things like filling water jars. Maybe it’s filling food pantries, or sandbags, or hungry mouths. Maybe it’s showing up for a friend. Our 1st Corinthians text reminds us that we all have unique gifts from the Holy Spirit to use for the common good. And our gifts are ours. They aren’t meant to be compared to others. We can all serve God and neighbor in our unique way.

And finally, where do you turn when something gives out in your life? Do you first try to go it alone? Invite Jesus into the situation. Pray about it. Ask the community of faith for help. In scripture, Jesus commands us to come to him. Matthew 11:28 “Come to me all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.” Or in Matthew 6:7 “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.”

In the story of Jesus turning water into wine, he saves the best for last. His greatest sign, his hour, will be the cross and resurrection. And No matter what gives out in your life, the cross says, I am with you always, and the resurrection says there is always hope and new life around the corner. Amen