**The Good Wine Kept Till Now**

**John 2:1-11**

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

1.17.2020

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.”

There is some debate about what constitutes a good wine. When I was younger, MD 20/20, Taylor, and Manischewitz Concord Grape wines were near the top of my list. Having spent a few years in California, Pauline and I came to a different understanding of what is “good” wine. We learned to come from a different perspective and appreciate different nuances.

Now, I am probably in the minority in these parts when I say that what we use for communion wine is ***not*** a good wine.

 When you sit down to a glass of wine, let’s agree that we should all enjoy what we like – whether we all like the same thing or not.

In our text, we learn that Jesus was quite the vintner, making such good wine that it made an impression on the master of the feast. There is nothing in our text, nor do we know the customs of that particular region was, nor do we know the criterion which made the water turned to wine, a “good” wine. Was it a Pinot Grigio, a Beaujolais, was it a white, a red, or a blush, or even a Concord grape wine?

It truly does not matter. What is important for us today it was ***THE Good Wine*** and that it was “kept until “now.”

The master of the feast was amazed at how good the wine was. He had thought that the first wine served, and which they ran out of, was the good wine. This wine brought to him is even better. It is so good that the master of the feast is impressed enough to call the bridegroom to point this fact out.

By the way, this was wine – not grape juice. It is why the master was amazed, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Do you understand the point? If you serve the good wine first, after a couple of glasses, people will not notice when you switch to a lesser quality wine.

This however is not the main point either.

Interestingly, the bridegroom had no clue about this particular good wine, nor did he know where it came from. Some of the servants knew, but the bridegroom did not.

What is the point of John giving us this first of Jesus’ miracles? Neither Matthew, Mark, or Luke record it for us. With simple Greek, what is God trying to convey in the rich theology of this event.

Yes, this is a miracle.

Yes, this is the first of His signs.

Yes, His disciples were amazed and believed in Him.

Let us examine some details.

Jesus had 6 stone jugs filled with water – between 120 and 180 gallons. Let’s just take a middle ground and say, about 150 gallons. To put that into perspective – that is over 9 half barrels of beer or 758 normal bottles of wine.

Then Jesus had the servants draw some of the water out and take it to the master of the feast. Wow! A miracle! It is now wine, **very *good***wine.

That in itself is a miracle. But there is something even greater than the miracle of changing water into wine taking place.

Consider... There was no reason for Jesus to make wine for the wedding. Was it necessary to heal someone? Was it necessary to save someone’s life? Did He ***really*** need to be involved in such a mundane thing? If they ran out of wine at a wedding, did they really ***need*** more?

Jesus’ stepping in here, shows His concern with even the simple things of this life. There is still more. That is only the top layer, the simple outward thing easily seen with the eyes that is going on here. Some people make it no further than that – Jesus made water into wine! Wooh, hoo! Let’s invite Him to our party!

Some stop there and try to explain it so that Jesus did not make wine, only grape juice. But that is revealed as false by the master of the feast’s response.

Jesus did perform this miracle to teach His disciples. AND, God inspired John to record it, so that it might also teach you.

The Law was given by God to Moses long ago. Consider that Law-giving in the context of this miracle, that the Law came first – it was the first wine.

When the Israelites were given the Law, it showed that they were the chosen people of God, His chosen nation Israel. With their release from Egypt and their coming to Sinai and there receiving the Law from God, it proclaimed to them – and all nations – that they were set apart and special. They were to be His Church, His bride. As the Bridegroom He provided the wine, that which would bring joy and happiness in their marital relationship – the Law!

It was good! It was the gift of the Groom to His Bride – the gift of God to His Church.

God’s Law had a simple task. If followed perfectly, that Law brings joy and happiness to all.

Unfortunately, it was given to sinners – sinners took what was holy and tainted it. God’s Law had also a second and very simple task, in fact, it was and is the foremost task – to show them that they were still sinners. The Law could not make them perfect. The Law could not save them.

Do this, don’t do that – that’s what people think God’s Law does. Most think it is a recipe for holy living. Indeed, it is. But it is a recipe that we, as sinners, cannot follow. While the Law is holy and perfect, we are not. In fact, the requirements of the Law show us how imperfect we truly are, and how much we fail daily.

Think of Moses, God’s chosen one to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Even though specially called by God through the use of a burning bush, He doubted God. Moses was not perfect. Although chosen by God to lead the Israelites, Moses was unworthy to look at the face of God. God would only let him look at His back.

The Law, though holy and perfect and righteous, cannot save you or me. It drives us to repentance and points us to where salvation comes. It points us to Jesus! It points us to God’s Christ. Jesus is even better than the Law. You have kept the good wine till now…

God gives His son, Jesus Christ. Those at that wedding, though unbeknownst to them at the time, got to see God’s face, hidden in human flesh. Though He was in the world, the world did not know Him – even His own did not receive Him. (John 1:11) God was hidden in plain sight, in human flesh. Ultimately, they killed Him, His perfect life – His perfect holiness – His perfect keeping of the Law in human flesh, sacrificed when they nailed Him to the cross.

His perfection was sacrificed to purchase forgiveness for all those who fail at the Law.

He was the good wine kept till now. His incarnation, life, suffering, death and resurrection kept from taking place until the fullness of time had come. God’s Christ kept until the right time in order that these things might take place to purchase forgiveness of sins.

Now, let us dig even deeper. Consider all these things together.

Jesus is at a wedding…

Throughout Scripture, God talks about Himself as the bridegroom and His church as His bride.

Furthermore, Heaven is called the eternal wedding feast.

Consider also this miracle, Jesus turns water to wine.

Is there anything in The Church that deals with water? Baptism!

Is there anything in The Church that deals with wine? The Lord’s Supper!

Baptism leads to the Lord’s Supper. We receive the good wine, kept till now.

And while the Lord’s Supper is the *Good Wine Kept Until Now*, even this Holy Meal we have set before us today on the altar is only a foretaste of the feast to come. In our eternal home, in resurrected flesh, we will not have to worry about sins corrupting our bodies. At the eternal wedding banquet feast, those who have overcome this mortal life by faith will get the best wine for eternity.

Until that last day and our arrival at our eternal home, we have to live our lives in this world. Is this a good life? We have come through one of the most tumultuous years many of us can remember. Some remember individual unsettling events in their lives, but 2020 was a whole year of unsettling.

Yet even in the midst of all that, we were/are given many blessings to enjoy – if we only stop to look at them. We still have family, friends, food, drink, celebrations to rejoice in, and so many pleasures given to us by our Creator. Yes, the life we are given to live in this flesh is good.

Yet even in the midst of our joys, even hidden in our blessings, is the stain of sin. Sin confronts us every day. Sin brings heart ache, pain, sorrow, and tribulations into our lives.

Even knowing the truth of sinfulness in this life, there are those who have an overwhelming infatuation with this life -worried about every little thing in this life. God will provide all you need, even making the *good wine* for that wedding.

But, dear friends, the best is yet to come. It is yours, for Jesus brings it to you Himself. He is the bridegroom of the eternal wedding feast.

Yes, this life is good because He has given you and me so very many blessings each and every day.

But today, this day, this holy day, His Sunday – He has kept the good wine till now. He has kept the best He has to give and He gives it to you till this morning. Jesus serves you the good wine – He serves you ***THE BEST WINE!!!*** Here and now, in this very place, He gives you His blood of the New Testament in His Supper for the forgiveness of sins. Here is the wedding banquet where the Son gives you to eat and to drink so that you might be fed and nourished to enjoy the best wine for all eternity.

Thanks be to God, in Jesus Christ. Amen.