**Do Whatever He Tells You**

**John 2:1-11**

Epiphany 2 – 01.15.2023

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

You know this event from the life of Jesus, you have heard it often. You hear it yearly as the Gospel lesson appointed for this 2nd Sunday in Epiphany. It is one of those stories from the life of Christ that people talk about often – it is His first miracle. And what is more, everybody loves to hear about wine and a wedding. Usually, a good time is had by all.

In this miracle, as in all the Gospel lessons for Epiphany, we are given glimpses into the Divine nature of Jesus. For the most part, He has humbled Himself so that His humanity veils His Divinity so that it is truly secreted away. But we are given glimpses of His Divine nature when He does something which is truly miraculous.

There is some speculation that Mary and Jesus are somehow related to the groom or the bride. It must have been someone close to Jesus, for His disciples are also invited. This is not some small gathering. All too soon a problem develops, they run out of wine. We do not understand the significance of this problem, for we do not hold wine in the same regard as they did as Jews – especially in that day.

Wine was a staple! It was a part of what they did! Remember Noah and the flood? After getting off the ark, the first thing he did was build and altar and offer sacrifices to God in thanks for his salvation. After God had given him the promise of the rainbow, Noah began his agricultural endeavors, and included immediately was that he planted a vineyard.

Going back to the wedding in Cana, we can see that running out of wine was a serious issue. Running out of wine was a blemish on the reputation of bridegroom, it was an embarrassment to the whole family.

Mary heard the distressing news. For years she had been pondering in her heart the things that were revealed at the birth of her firstborn son. She had watched Him growing up. She knew that her child was different. He had not needed to be disciplined as other children, for He was without sin. Now, He was a rabbi, He had His own disciples, the voice from heaven had spoken at His baptism, “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.”

Mary tells the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” Soon it comes to pass that Jesus speaks to them, telling them to fill the jars that are present for the right of purification, with water. They do so. Then Jesus tells them to take some out of one of the jars and give it to the master – the steward – of the feast.

The servants had put water in the clay jars, but did they know it was now wine as they took some to the steward of the feast? We truly don’t know. What we do know is that after tasting the water now wine, the Steward of the feast declares that this is “good wine,” even better than what had been served first.

“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.” Everybody serves the good wine first because after a couple glasses of wine people are a bit less concerned about how good it tastes – they really cannot tell the difference. There is something in wine that has that affect. Yes, alcohol!

Those who like to declare that Jesus did not make wine in this miracle, only grape juice, do so because they have a poor theology. They teach that drinking alcohol is a sin. God does say that drunkenness is a sin, but not that wine is – nor the drinking of wine. Overindulgence is! Drunkenness is sin because one loses control of their will-power and too easily succumbs to temptation, falling more easily into sin.

Those who claim that alcohol is a sin have a poor theology because they also believe that they can become sinless in this life, and it is in their decision to accept Jesus and stop sinning that they are saved. Yes, it is all about their works – not Christ’s work.

When we hear the phrase “Do whatever Jesus tells you,” we think about the things of the Law. We think about the “doing” of things. It becomes all about our works. We begin to think, “If I do the right things, then God will be happy with – Jesus will be happy with me.”

Did you hear what happened in our text? Mary told the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” And what did Jesus tell them to do?

Did He tell them, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?”

Did He tell them, “Love your neighbor as yourself?”

Did He tell them, “Thou shall not murder?”

Did He tell them, “Forgive and you will be forgiven?”

He did not tell them anything in regard to the Torah of God. He did not tell them anything in regard to how they should live their life in love toward God or toward their neighbor. With the stone jars that were there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding between twenty or thirty gallons, Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.”

After they had filled them completely, He told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” Which they did. When the steward tasted the water now turned to wine, he was amazed at how good it was.

“Do whatever He tells you,” Little did they know they would witness a great miracle of turning at least 120 gallons of water into wine.

“Do whatever He tells you,” And Jesus brings joy back to the wedding banquet. This whole thing is about the wedding banquet feast of the Master.

In our text servants obediently fill water jugs and Jesus turns the water to wine. This first miracle is all about Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. And right now, you are thinking, “Pastor, how do you get Baptism and the Lord’s Supper out of this miracle?”

Jesus is at a wedding which is about to be a bust. He uses the jugs for purification with water – baptism – and turns that water into wine. Baptism leads to the Lord’s Supper where we have not just wine, but the best wine, the blood of Christ wine. Christ uses water into wine to make sure the joyous celebration continues.

Heaven is constantly spoken of as the Great Wedding Banquet. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the means by which Christ gives us His blessings and makes our gathering for worship a foretaste of that wedding banquet celebration which we will enjoy for eternity.

We could look at the command, “Do whatever He tells you,” and examine our life according to Torah. We would soon discover that what we confessed earlier is all too true. “I, a poor miserable sinner, confess unto you all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended you.”

Mary’s command to the servants comes from Mary’s confidence that God’s desire to be gracious and bless the wedding banquet.

Jesus did all His Father told Him, in order to bless the wedding banquet. He fulfilled Torah and gave His life as the holy and perfect sacrifice to purchase a place for you and me at that banquet table.

Mary’s words come to your ears, “Do whatever He tells you.”

Jesus says: “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” Baptismal waters continue to cover you. Baptism is your bond and seal of the forgiveness Jesus purchased and gives you. As you daily remember your sin, daily remember your baptism – that while yet a sinner, Christ died for you. He has come to you and made you His forgiven child. He has robed you in His garment of salvation – His own righteousness – your wedding garment.

Mary’s words ring in your ears, “Do whatever He tells you.” Jesus says: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Whosoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven.” So Christ commands His ministers to speak to you? In their Word of Christ, the sacrifice He made to purchase your forgiveness covers the sinfulness you confessed before Him? Those sins are gone – believe it!

Mary’s words continue to ring your ears, “Do whatever He tells you.” Jesus says: “Take eat, this is My Body; take drink, this is My Blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” Come to the table which is a foretaste of the eternal wedding banquet. Eat! Drink! Partake of and receive the very body pierced, and the very blood spilled to purchase your forgiveness. Eat and drink forgiveness! Receive the life of Christ!

Let Mary’s words bring comfort and joy to your ears, “Do whatever He tells you.”

Jesus declares: “Peace be with you!” As Christ declares, so it is! You have peace, a peace beyond all comprehension – a peace which will last for eternity. Enjoy the wedding feast of the Lamb now and forevermore. In the name of Jesus. Amen.