

*Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our heavenly Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**John 2:1-11 (EHV)**

<sup>1</sup> Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.

<sup>3</sup> When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine."

<sup>4</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet."

<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

<sup>6</sup> Six stone water jars, which the Jews used for ceremonial cleansing, were standing there, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." And they did.

<sup>9</sup> When the master of the banquet tasted the water that had now become wine, he did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew). The master of the banquet called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!"

<sup>11</sup> This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.



*Dear Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit upon us so that, as we consider this first sign of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we may believe in him. Amen.*

If we take notice of the gospel readings about Jesus, we'd normally hear how Jesus is usually doing something important like calling people to repentance, proclaiming the gospel, healing the sick, teaching people, raising the dead, or preparing to suffer and die for us – you know, Kingdom of God stuff!

But today is different.

Today it seems like Jesus isn't supposed to be the centre of attention.

Jesus is attending a wedding, as a guest.

He's not the host. He's not the master of ceremonies. He's not the marriage celebrant. He's not healing, teaching, or doing anything of importance. He's a guest, probably sitting near his Mum, Mary.

It's one of the very few times we hear Jesus participating in the life of those around him. He's attending the joyous celebration of a wedding between a man and a woman. He's simply mixing with family and friends with no divine purpose in mind.

But John calls our attention to this event in Jesus' life by referring to it as the first of Jesus' signs which point to his divinity as the Son of God. This is his first sign which helped his disciples, and us, believe in him.

And what was the unexpected problem which led to Jesus performing this sign? Well, the wedding celebration had run out of wine! How dare the wine run short at a wedding! This is a very embarrassing situation for the couple and their families!

However, Jesus' mother, Mary, notices the problem. She also knows this hasn't got anything to do with Jesus and his salvation mission, so she simply states the fact to her son: "They have no wine." She doesn't even ask Jesus to do anything about it.

Jesus also asks, “What’s this got to do with me?”

It’s not his responsibility. It’s not his fault. It’s not his mission.

So, while we’d all like Jesus to grant us happy days filled with good people, good food, and good wine; make the lights turn green when we’re running late; stop us from getting sick or injured; grant us the right portions of rain and sunshine on days which would be convenient for us; and bless our everyday activities, it’s not his primary purpose. This isn’t what he’s here to do.

He’s not here for our convenience or to make our life more comfortable. He’s here to suffer and die for the forgiveness of our sins so we would be reconciled to God the Father. That’s his job. That’s his purpose. And the time for his suffering and death hadn’t yet come.

But despite the fact this isn’t the time or place or situation for Jesus to do anything, Mary tells the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them.

In other words, she’s calling them to trust him.

In this case, their trust wasn’t to be a passive trust as if there was no response needed. It was to be an active trust. This means, like us, if they trusted his words, they would faithfully do what he says.

Jesus directed them to six stone jars which were there for the Jewish rite of purification – each of them capable of holding between 70-100 litres. This was where cooking utensils and hands were to be washed to ensure they were ritually clean. They should have been full of water for this purpose. The fact Jesus tells them to fill them up with water may have indicated this was another problem.

In other words, not only had the wine run dry, but the jars of water to purify people’s hands and utensils may have also dried up.

Jesus tells them to fill them with water, then to draw some out and take it to the master of the feast to taste.

The servants trusted Jesus’ words and did what they were told, and the resulting wine was of exceptional quality!

Although we can’t help wonder why one jar wouldn’t have been enough. I mean wouldn’t we think up to 100 litres of wine would be enough for a wedding? But no! Jesus provides them with up to 600 litres of exceptional wine! That’s about 750 bottles of wine!

But then again, this is also the first sign of God’s abundant grace and mercy through Jesus and how much he wishes to bless his people.

While the master of the feast was unaware of the miracle, the servants (and later the disciples) were aware of it. This miracle is a sign which is written down and shared with us hoping we’ll believe in Jesus.

Therefore, we’re to believe it was the first sign which points us to the fact Jesus is much more than human. This is a miraculous glimpse of the glory of God in human flesh who comes to save us all from sin through his death and resurrection. And even though this wedding (and the problem of them running out of wine) had nothing to do with his purpose of salvation, it shows his love and compassion.

His hour of glory would come at the right time, but it wasn’t like what happened at this wedding feast. His most glorious moment wasn’t turning water into wine, or walking on water, or healing the sick, or raising the dead, but his greatest glory was when he hung on the cross to die for our sins so we may be forgiven.

In his hour of glory, he wouldn't be offered water, or even some of this good wine. He would be offered sour wine instead, and he drank from that bitter cup.

His glorious hour came as he suffered and died because someone had to pay. Someone always has to pay, and we can't pay or make up for all the times we don't trust God or do what he says.

And so, Jesus paid that price by taking our place of punishment: the maker of the good wine was sacrificed for those who ran out of wine; the vine-keeper gave up his life for the good of those attached to the true vine; the Son of God died so that people like you and me would be forgiven and granted the inheritance of eternal life in his kingdom where the wedding feast never ends.

When everything is going well and we have all we need, we don't always feel the need for Jesus, or his miracles, or his forgiveness, or his gift of life. When our life is rosy and full of celebration, we don't always feel the need for Christ or his saving work. When we figure we're living good lives, we don't always feel the need for his forgiveness. Of course, the need for our forgiveness and mercy is still there, but we don't, or won't, acknowledge our need.

But it's when the wine and celebrations run dry, when we feel our inadequacy and incompetence, when we realise we've failed our God and those around us, when we're in need of mercy, when we feel the sting of death as our bodies slowly break down, when we feel the bitterness of injustice or broken trust, when our hearts are emptied of love or peace or hope, and when unforgiveness makes our hearts as cold and as empty as those stone jars, our need for a Saviour is exposed once more. We then eagerly turn to our Lord and look for a sign of his gracious presence to fill our hearts once more with his Spirit.

You see, under our own power, we'll always run dry and won't attain the holiness and perfection demanded of us, but Jesus still wishes to fill us and bless us with forgiveness, love, and grace. He not only wishes to bless every man and women who join in marriage, but he also wishes to bless his bride, the church. As our groom, he fills us with his Holy Spirit so we may trust his words, submit in humble obedience to his teachings for our good, and bless the world around us as we love and serve our neighbours.

For example, Jesus tells us to make disciples by baptising and teaching. In baptism the holy name of God miraculously binds itself to the waters and in turn binds us to Jesus himself so we may receive the benefits of his death and resurrection through faith. Part of Jesus' instructions for baptism included learning and doing what he teaches us. So as baptised people, we keep on listening to Jesus and do what he says.

He tells us to take and eat and drink. In the Lord's Supper we don't have the miracle of water turning into wine, but the body and blood of Christ miraculously binds himself to the bread and wine. We faithfully receive his body and blood into our mouths and bodies for the forgiveness of our sin through faith.

Jesus tells us to forgive as we've been forgiven. If we forgive based only on our own goodness, or the goodness of others, we'll very quickly run dry and won't forgive. Yet filled with the grace and mercy of Christ's forgiveness through his death for our sins, we pass on that sweet and heavenly forgiveness to those around us and so they too will marvel at the miracle of God's grace.

Whether our lives are abounding with God's good gifts, or we feel empty and have run dry in our faith, Jesus tells us to pray, trusting our heavenly Father hears us for the sake of his dear Son Jesus Christ. God will hear us. He's promised it. We trust it. We do it faithfully.

In today's reading the hour of Christ's glory hadn't come, yet Jesus acted to bless those around him and gave us the first sign which encourages us to listen to him and do what he says.

If he was able to bless this wedding celebration so much, even though his hour hadn't yet come, how much more will he bless us now that his hour *has* come? How much more will he bless us as we trust in his words and do what he says?

*After all, the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

Pastor Stuart Kleinig  
South Burnett Lutheran Parish  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany  
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