

John 2:1–11
2nd Sun. after Epiphany
Kaiserslautern Ev. Luth. Ch.
January 14, 2024

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

Dearly bought hearers by the blood of Jesus Christ,

This morning we consider our Lord's first miracle, turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana. To many people, this miracle might come across as unnecessary or luxurious, over the top and wasteful. Christians are so used to considering our Lord's help of the poor, His healing of the sick, casting out demons from the possessed and raising the dead. Those seem like the important miracles. But then there's this turning water into wine, the first and therefore chief miracle Jesus performs. Why would Jesus's first miracle seem so worldly? The wedding guests already had enough wine to drink. Did they really need more? Shouldn't our Lord rather have cut them off? But that's not how Jesus is. With this first miracle, this first sign of who Jesus is, our Lord manifested His glory before the disciples to show them something about His death and resurrection, to show them how He answers prayer beyond anything we could think or imagine, and how this abundance of God we experience now will be perfected in eternity at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

“On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.” This time indicator is key, as it always is in the Scriptures. On the third day from what? Well, if you keep looking back into John 1 you'll notice other signs of the times. John keeps saying: “the next day . . . the next day . . . the next day.” The third day here is from the call of the first disciples. That's when Jesus walked by John the Baptist and John the Baptist said: “Behold, the Lamb of God!” One of John the Baptist's disciples, Andrew, was there. The other disciple,

the one who remains unnamed, must be John the Evangelist, the human author of this account. Andrew brought his brother, Simon Peter, along. The next day, Jesus found Philip and said “follow me.” And then Philip found Nathanael and brought him along. On the next day, the third day, was this wedding at Cana in Galilee.

But “the third day” is not just for us to keep track of the timing of these events. John could have just as well written “the next day” in that case. Instead, John specifically writes “on the third day.” The third day is crucial. At Mt. Sinai, the LORD said to Moses “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people” (Ex 19:10–11). In the Prophet Hosea 6:1–2, the people say: “Come, let us return to the LORD; for He has torn us, that He may heal us; He has struck us down, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him.” The first and second days are always preparatory, and the third day is the big event. So it is that Jesus tells His disciples multiple times throughout His ministry: “the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise” (Luke 24:7). “The third day” is all about the Resurrection, including here at the wedding at Cana. In this first of Jesus’s miracles at the wedding in Cana, we have a picture of the Resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

But first, we have a problem: “They have no wine.” Mary, the mother of Jesus, comes to her son understanding that He is able to lend a helping hand. Mary goes to her son, trusting that He of all people can do something to fix the situation quickly. On the one hand, Mary believes Jesus can do something to prevent the shame coming to this Bridegroom. On the other hand, Mary wants Jesus to act according to her plans, her wishes, and her timetable. But Jesus doesn’t

operate like that. As God, He does things in His own time and in His own way. We have only to put our finger to our lips and silently adore the wonderful and mysterious way in which He works. He will cover our shame and answer our prayers, but He'll do it in His time, not ours.

Jesus then says to His mom: "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." To us, Jesus's response might come across as rude. But our Lord does not break the 4th commandment. He honors His mother, even though He has to correct her at times. As the Son of God, He can do that. What Jesus says to His mother is not done in disrespect. He's simply emphasizing that He is, in fact, the Son of God who has come to earth for a specific purpose. Here Jesus is also looking ahead to His death on the cross, where He covers our shame and where He responds to our deepest need. There, from the cross, Jesus again calls His mother "Woman." From the cross, Jesus says to Mary: "Woman, behold your son" and to John: "Behold your mother" (John 19:26).

Another indication that Jesus is pointing to His crucifixion and resurrection is that He says here: "My hour has not yet come." Throughout the Gospel of John, the authorities seek to arrest Jesus, but His hour, or His time, had not yet come" (John 7:6-8, 30; 8:20). But then before the Feast of the Passover, on the night He was betrayed, "Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father" (John 13:1). And then in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prays: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you." The hour of Jesus's glory is His death on the cross, His rest in the Tomb, and His rising again from the dead on the Third Day. That's the appointed time (Ps 75:2), the favorable time, the day of salvation (2 Cor 6:2).

In the Gospel of John, Jesus also refers to the death of His disciples as their "hour" (John 16:2,25,32). But He also refers to our resurrection from the dead in terms of an hour: "Truly,

truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live . . . an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:25, 28–29). When Jesus says: “My hour has not yet come,” He’s referring to His glorification, which comes in His death and resurrection, and then in your death and resurrection, too. That’s where our Lord Jesus Christ is glorified.

Jesus’s hour had not yet come, but in this miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana, Jesus “manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.” Mary tells the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them to do. Jesus had them fill the six stone water jars all the way up to the brim, and then draw some out to take to the master of the feast. At some point in that process, the water was turned into wine. Notice how Jesus performed this miracle without a big outward show. He changed suffering into joy almost unnoticed. Only His mother, His disciples, and the servants would have understood what Jesus just did. The other guests would have simply kept on partying. Jesus could have made a big deal out of it, but His hour had not yet come. This is how Jesus often works. He answers our requests not necessarily in our time or in our way, but in His time and in His ways. Sometimes Jesus gives us what we need or even more than we need before we even know what we’re lacking.

The master of the feast wasn’t privy to everything that had just happened. He tastes the water become wine and is confused about why the bridegroom would save the best wine for last. The world drinks the good wine first, and then what is cheap. The world seeks after health, wealth, enjoyment and pleasures right now and then has no taste for what is truly good. But the people of God gladly suffer want here in this life, knowing that in Jesus, the best is yet to come

in eternal life. Jesus is preparing “a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined” (Is 25:6). In Jesus the best is yet to come. In the Resurrection of the dead: “He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken” (Is 25:8). That’s the glory yet to come that this miracle in Cana is pointing to.

Even now, we have a foretaste of this Feast yet to come. Jesus changes suffering into joy in an instant for those who wait upon Him (Is 40:13). He answers our requests in His time and in His ways, oftentimes beyond what we could ever think or imagine (Eph 3:20). Our LORD prepares a table before us already now in this life in the presence of our enemies. Jesus continues coming to us seemingly unnoticed and without any extravagant show. He comes to us in the foolishness of preaching and the Absolution. He comes to us in simple waters of Baptism and with His Body and Blood in the LORD’s Supper. There, in the feast of our Lord’s Body and Blood, we celebrate already now in this time the marriage Supper of the Lamb that will come in eternity. The wedding at Cana is a picture of how Jesus provides for us everyday and a picture of what we will enjoy in eternal life, when the hour comes for our LORD to return in all His glory. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. We stand for the Creed.