

PASTOR GREG – SERMON

11.10.2020

John water into wine. 2:1-11. *On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus answered, "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone jars, the kind used by the Jewish people for ceremonial washing, each holding about 75-115 litres. Jesus said to the servants "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." This, the first of his (Miraculous) signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory and his disciples believed into him.*

John 20:30. These (words) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a familiar story and one which is often read at weddings.

The early Church Fathers saw three key confessions in these words:

1. Jesus shows himself to be one with the Creator. By turning water into wine simply by simply speaking, Jesus shows he is the Lord of **Creation**.
2. Our story highlights the importance and joy of **marriage**, evident from the very beginning in Genesis.
3. Jesus turns the water of Judaism into the **new wine of Christianity**. The six stone jars were used for ceremonial washing by the Jewish people. They did so because they thought that if they had had contact with a 'sinner' or a Gentile then they themselves would be unclean. In one sense the stone jars represented a false understanding of God's laws as revealed in Leviticus. So when Jesus turned the ceremonial washing water into wine the thinking is that the New Testament has replaced the OT.

Let us keep these in our minds and hearts as we consider these words.

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. What is this 'third day'? We were told that John the Baptist while baptising was asked if he was the Christ. Then we hear: *the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him.* Again, later we hear: *the next day John was there again...* and Jesus began calling the disciples to follow him. Now we hear: *on the third day...* I tried to work all this out like I plan things in my diary but I started getting a little confused. But maybe this is not a time line but rather a word that calls us to consider something else when we hear the words *on the third day*. And of course that *third day* is the Day of Resurrection. The gospel of John points to and revolves around the Easter story: sin and grace, darkness and light, death and life, fear and love.

And of course these words confess that marriage is a gift of God and is the foundation of every Godly human community and maintains the well being of every society.

Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. We know who the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ is- Mary- but why is she not named as such. As important as she was and is still she must never take the place of her Son in our personal piety, prayer life or worship. And why were they there? Who were the people getting married? We would like to know but we are not told- rather than wondering who was on the guest list we are called to fix our eyes on Jesus- the author and perfecter of our faith.

When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." Why? Why was the wine gone? In that time and that place this would have been an offensive and shameful thing- what no more wine! What sort of wedding is this! But more than that, why did Mary turn to Jesus and tell him: *"They have no more wine?"* Why would she put that responsibility on him? What did she expect him to do? Open his wallet and go and buy more wine? Or did she know something that others at the wedding did not know?

We would all like to know how Jesus lived his early life... Did Mary see him perform wonderful miracles earlier? Maybe and maybe not but she sure knew how he was conceived.

"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus answered, "My time has not yet come."

My NIV translates "Woman" as *"Dear woman..."* But the original Greek simply has Jesus answering his very own mother as 'Woman'. Which is the very same way he addressed her as he hung dying on the Cross: *"Woman, here is your son"* and to the disciple, *"Here is your mother."* From that time on, this disciple took her into his own home. We are not told how Jesus said these words to his mother- were they blunt, angry, wondering or were they said in love and with respect. But maybe we might be reminded of another woman who came to Jesus asking for help: The Canaanite woman whose daughter was dying (Matt 7:6). There Jesus really did rebuke her but she, like Mary, did not give up on Jesus. Luther had this to say about these words: See how unkindly Jesus turns away the humble request of his mother who addresses him with such great confidence. Now observe the nature of faith. What has it to rely on? Absolutely nothing, all is darkness. It feels need and sees help nowhere; on addition, God turns against it like a stranger and does not recognise it, so that absolutely nothing is left. It is the same with our conscience when we feel our sin and the lack of righteousness; or in the agony of death when we feel the lack of life; or in the dread of hell when eternal salvation seems to have left us...Just as he here treats his mother by refusal making the need greater and more distressing than it was before she came to him with the request...this is where faith stands in the heat of battle. Now observe how his mother acts and so becomes our teacher. She will not give up on him.

But before that, what does this mean: *"My time has not yet come."* Words spoken by Jesus later in 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20. My hour has not yet come. What hour? The answer is given in John 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1: *The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.* The glorification of Jesus the Christ happens as he dies on the Cross- for your sins and for the sin of the world.

But to return to Mary: *His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."* This is what Luther was on about. This is why the Canaanite woman's daughter was healed because both women in the face of seeming rejection by Jesus DID NOT GIVE UP ON HIM. And the words Mary spoke to the servants at the wedding in Cana are the words of God: *Do whatever he tells you.* In the account of the Transfiguration we hear God the Father say: *This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen and keep on listening to him.* And when you listen- obey.

Nearby stood six stone jars, the kind used by the Jewish people for ceremonial washing, each holding about 75-115 litres. Jesus said to the servants "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." The wedding servants listened and obey and the miracle of creation once again happened- at the words of Jesus. And surely we are reminded of Psalm 23: *My cup overflows.* Our God, the only God is a God of abundance.

They did so and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Again and again through the gospel of John we have this contrast between knowing and not- knowing; between seeing and not-seeing. It all depends of faith in Christ.

Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." Amos 9:13; Isaiah 25:6; Jer 31:12 all prophesy of the time when God would redeem His people and all of creation evidenced by a huge bounty.

This, the first of his (Miraculous) signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory and his disciples believed into him.

It could be that there are seven signs in the Gospel of John: Water into wine; the healing of the official's son; the healing of the blind man in 5; the feeding of the 5000, the walking on water; the healing of another blind man in 9 and the raising of Lazarus. But the point of all these signs are not what Jesus did but what they revealed him to be. Today, our reading proclaims Jesus as the Lord of Creation. Amen.