

'The Word became flesh and lived among us. We have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.' Come and see his glory.

Read John 2:1-12

'On the third day'... it's the opening line of this story. If you are a Christian, this is your song. 'On the third day' is always followed by, 'he arose, hallelujah, Christ arose!'

'On the third day means 'resurrection'.

This story is somehow connected to the resurrection of Jesus. Somehow, maybe we will find out how or why today, maybe we won't, but there is a resurrection, Easter angle to this story.

'On the third day there was a **wedding** in Cana of Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the **wedding**.

Jewish weddings during the time of Christ were very big deals. They usually began on Tuesday nights. The groom and his friends would go over to the bride's house at night. On the way over, the groomsmen would be swinging their olive-oil lamps, having a great time. The men would gather in front of the bride's home, and she would come outside. Speeches would be made. Expressions of good will would be offered. Now, for the first time in her adult life, the bride would take off her veil and show off how beautiful she really was. This removal of the veil was a special event. Then, the whole wedding party would again walk down the streets with their olive-oil lamps swinging and they would go over to the groom's house to begin a **seven-day party**. We

have no details about the religious ceremony. But the wedding feast lasted seven days. The host it seems would supply the wine.

When you are hosting a wedding you really want things to be perfect for your guests. At one wedding in our family, the hotel served cream that curdled in the coffee. Not cool.

At this wedding in Cana of Galilee, the wine ran out.

Not cool.

Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no wine'.

Was she helping with the wedding? Were the couple family? Was she thirsty? Was she saying, 'let's get out of here'? Was she speaking out of compassion or embarrassment for the couple?

We just don't know.

He says, "Woman, 'what's that got to do with us?' 'My time has not yet come'.

It is too bad that we cannot hear the tone of Jesus' voice, or see his body language or the look in his eye when he says that.

Because it sounds really rude on the surface. And that is the part that throws us off. I was talking to someone this week who said that line bothers her so much that when she reads the story she skips right over it.

This is the special feast for **this couple**. This is their big seven days. This is the start of their life together. This is their shining moment. This is so embarrassing for them.

And in small towns no one forgets anything. Twenty-five years later friends and neighbours and in-laws will still be saying, 'you wouldn't happen to have a nice glass of wine, would you?' Their grandchildren will be carrying the shame of this disaster two generations down the line.

And when Jesus is told they have run out of wine, He says, 'so what, it does not really matter, **my** time has not come'.

I'll bet that sounds rude in any culture.

Some say, 'Jesus was teaching his mother that she now had to relate to him as her Lord.' Some say, 'he was not really planning to do any miracles yet'.

I wonder if maybe he was teasing her. Joking?

What we do know, is that when Jesus says, 'woman', he is not being disrespectful. It sounds worse in English. He actually is being respectful. (just don't try this with your own moms)

Whenever we hear something that shocks us from Jesus and we do not understand, it means that we need to pay attention and keep listening.

I'm hoping that since we will be listening to John together from now till Easter, that you will also read it at home with your family or by yourself. If you do, you will hear this phrase again.

"My time has not come", or "My hour has not come", or "This or that did not happen because Jesus time had not yet come". And then, you will hear, 'now Jesus'

time has come'. And it is really important to notice what is happening when Jesus' time has come. I'm not going to give it away right now.

'It does not really matter that they have run out of wine, because I am the real, **true, bridegroom**'.

During advent we heard from Isaiah 62, 'as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.'

We heard from Revelation 21, "I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband..."

And Jesus says, 'it's ok, **my time** has not yet come. There will come a time when the Lord will be married to his people, there will be a great wedding day. This wedding ain't it, but that day is coming."

Then, even though **this day** is not **the** day, Jesus acts. Of course he does. Because his glory, the thing we are invited to come and see, is that he is **full of grace and truth**. He is full of love and compassion and faithfulness. Mary knows her son. She knows he will help somehow.

She tells the servants, 'do whatever he tells you to do'.

There are six stone water jars standing there. Each one of them held 90 to 136 litres of water.

They were used for ceremonial washing.

Ceremonial washing is symbolic. Native Canadians smudge. Other traditions use water. Every religious tradition has some kind of answer to the problem of washing inside where no wash cloth can reach, no body wash can touch. As human beings we recognize that before God we need to be clean inside. We fear that God or others will see the dirt of our shame and our guilt.

And so, before their worship services, the Jews would wash their faces, before prayers they would wash their hands and feet. These water jars were for symbolic washing.

Jesus thought, 'they'll do just fine'.

He said to the servants, "I want these vats filled up to the brim.

So the servants filled those six jars right up to the top with water. They must have thought that Jesus was going to get everyone over to purify themselves. Maybe the lack of wine was symbolic of a lack of dedication.

But Jesus then said to the servants, "I want you to take some wine over to the maitre'd to see what it tastes like." The servant took some wine over to the maitre'd. He sipped it and said, "Wow! The groom has saved the best wine until last." The maitre'd looked at the six vats of wine and said, "That is a lot of wine. There is way more than we will need here."

Jesus took the water of anxiety, the water of 'do I belong here', the water of, 'will God accept me now', the water of laws that then numbered more than 600 regulations, and he transformed them into a great celebration of his love and faithfulness. He is forever

committed to us. He is married to us. We are loved by Jesus. We are accepted by Jesus. He rejoices over us with singing.

And there is more than enough wine for everyone to celebrate.

Two notes:

This is so extravagant! That fits with the Messiah the Jews were waiting for. They used to say, 'when the Messiah comes, the earth shall yield its fruit ten thousand fold. On each vine there shall be a thousand branches, and each branch shall produce a thousand clusters, and each cluster shall produce a thousand grapes, and each grape shall produce a cor of wine'. (25-75 gallons) 2 Bar. 29:5 Boring and Craddock

This is so gracious and respectful of the couple.....

There is a kind of help that humiliates. There is a kind of help that comes with photo ops. Jesus does this incognito, only the servants and his disciples knew the story. He graciously honours this poor couple. **They** would forever be known as the people who set the new standard for wine at parties and weddings. People would say to their grandchildren, 'when your grandparents got married, my, that was a time. I can hardly remember it, but the wine was spectacular!'

This is the **first** of Jesus' signs. But not just the first in number, this is the premiere, the programmatic of Jesus' signs. If you want to know what is so special about Jesus, if you want to see his glory, you need to come and see this sign.

It is in this sign that we begin to see that grace and truth, love and faithfulness which is Jesus' glory.

It is in this sign that we see that these glories of Jesus are not just abstract, but that they mean action from Jesus, for us.

And so, in this generous, gracious way, Jesus revealed his glory. His disciples put their faith in him.

Will you? Will I? Will we come and see, will we watch and fall in love with Jesus all over again? Will we worship him and follow him into generous, gracious life, from us to each other, from us to our community? Just what might that look like?

As we worship him, Jesus will show us the way.

The Lord is gracious to you.

The Lord is gracious to me.

And all God's people said, Amen.

*References: I found a very helpful sermon by Ed Marquart on www.textweek.com ,
'The People's New Testament Commentary' by M. Eugene Boring and Fred B. Craddock was a great resource as always.