

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I wonder how many people were at that wedding in Cana. It was certainly a time of celebration, a time when family, including extended family would come together, no doubt friends as well, maybe all of Cana, as well as people from elsewhere, Mary the mother of Jesus for example, Jesus and the disciples that he had probably called to "come and see," that is to "follow him" just a few days before. It was no doubt a time of community, not only did the community come together to celebrate, but it was also the kind of event that builds community, not just a family or extended family, but even more than that, a number of families coming together in something that is bigger than themselves. Community.

Now the marriage probably took place following a betrothal, the kind that Mary and Joseph had. In this case it may be that the bridegroom and his friends moved in procession to the home of the bride, then together went in procession to the groom's home where the banquet was probably held. The celebration may have lasted an entire week or even longer, and the groom was responsible for the entire cost of the celebration, in fact according to Leon Morris in his commentary on the gospel of John, the bridegroom was legally required to provide a feast of a certain standard, and was liable to suit by the bride's family if he did not do so. This was a "honor/shame" society and honor demands that a certain standard be met. And they ran out of wine.

So this is where Jesus does the first of his signs. Remember what our gospel writer tells us concerning the signs that Jesus did? "But these 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."

Jesus' mother comes to him and tells him they have run out of wine. "Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come." Now by our standards this response from Jesus might have seemed rather brusque, even rude, disrespectful to his mother. But let us consider that a couple things. The Greek word translated here as "woman" is the same term Jesus uses when he is hanging on the cross, when he tells his mother "Dear Woman, here is your son," and to his disciple "here is your mother." This is a term of respect or affection even though it seems a bit unusual for a son to use to his mother. But something else is happening. Remember, this is the first of Jesus' signs. A new relationship is established, "My hour has not yet come," Jesus is now about the Father's business, the Son of Man is now about bringing the realities of God's Kingdom, to earth, to humanity, to you and to me.

Now Mary does not seem to have taken Jesus' words as a rebuke, she tells the servants, 'do whatever he tells you.' She knew he would do whatever was necessary, after all, he was her son. And Jesus turns water into wine. A lot of water into a lot of wine, then he tells the servants to take some to the steward.

So let's think about this for a few moments. In this first of his signs, we have a window into who Jesus is, and even perhaps, God's intentions for the world. There is abundance, even delight in this miracle, not only in the turning of water into wine, but also that it took place at a wedding feast, a gathering of community to celebrate two people becoming one.

Now reflect for a moment that we often seem to run out of wine. Maybe not in a literal sense, but we are on top of the world then everything crashes! Tragic news, a unfavorable medical diagnosis, loss of job, bad news for a family member.

But then in some respects, this sign is one that keeps us on our toes. This is a surprising miracle, and it shows us, that we cannot predict when, what, where, or how God will make his glory known among us, but at the right hour, it will happen, Jesus will make his glory known, and inspire faith, life and joy, even when we are in the midst of despair. God will act in God's own

time, at the hour of his choosing, not yours, not mine. But the hour will come and we know it will because we experience Jesus' presence, his life-giving presence among us

When the wine seems to run out of life, Jesus is here to turn water into wine, and we receive new hope, new life through the words of hope, through Jesus' glory, the glory present in his resurrection and ascension. The new wine in our gospel this morning reveals the presence, the power and the glory of Christ, in our sharing of wine around God's table in a few minutes we experience the glory of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, new wine, new life, renewed and strengthened faith, the grace of God revealed in the community in Cana, celebrated here in our community in Cook.

AMEN