

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord
St. John 2:1-11
January 15th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

When the Wine Failed

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, "They have no wine." And Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." His mother saith unto the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

We thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou didst hallow and adorn the holy estate of matrimony by Thy presence, and we humbly beseech Thee that Thou wouldst continually preserve and bless this holy ordinance, protect us from impurity and offenses, and evermore dwell in all Christian homes, relieving all their necessities in Thine own good time, O Thou, true God and faithful Friend of men, Who, having power over all things, livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

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

Our Lord + Jesus once again reveals Himself to be both God and man. At the Wedding in Cana on the third day after His baptism by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River, He manifested His glory. He performed the first of the signs that He would do to show that He was indeed both God and Man in one Person. His Apostles who were with Him believed on Him after this miracle. He changed water into wine.

Truly an amazing miracle, water jars which were only used in the purification rites, and therefore were not used for any other purpose lest they become considered contaminated, were filled to the brim with water. The wine had failed; it had run out long before the appropriate time. There could be no celebration without the proper amount of being "well drunk" by the guests. The water jars held two or three firkins, about twenty or thirty gallons a piece, and there were six water jars. That was a lot of water being turned into wine. Each of those jars was "filled to the brim."

Certainly, in this we see our Lord's generosity. We see how much He loves His people; how much He loves to supply their needs. He was not supplying this wine just so that everybody could be "well drunk" and have a good time with the appropriate amount of inebriation. He supplied the wine so that the bridegroom would not be embarrassed and shamed for allowing the wine to run out. Given the fact that the Blessed Virgin is not only invited, but seems to be involved in the inner workings of the wedding, we can rightly assume that the wedding was someone she knew. St. Mary was a handmaiden,

having been married to a poor carpenter. This wedding was probably also between two poor people. Therefore, it is not out of the question that the bridegroom supplied all the wine he could afford. Our Lord + Jesus in His mercy and compassion gifts the wine to the bridegroom so that he might have a blessed wedding celebration.

In this miracle alone our Lord + Jesus shows Himself to be both God and man. He is a man, the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was invited to the wedding; *He* was invited to the wedding, as was His disciples. He comes to the wedding as a man; as a Son of a handmaiden. By performing this miracle He shows that He is also the Lord God come down from Heaven to take upon Himself our flesh. Why does the Lord God take upon Himself our flesh? In order that He might redeem us from sin and death. He comes down from Heaven to dwell with us as One of us, in order that He might become our Bridegroom.

This wedding took place on the third day, the Apostle and Evangelist St. John tells us. He was one of those Apostles in attendance with the Lord + Jesus. He had been a disciple of St. John the Baptist, and when the Lord + Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him like a dove, and the Voice from Heaven declared that this Man was His Beloved Son in Whom He was well-pleased, St. John followed the Lord + Jesus as one of His Apostles. He has a firsthand—an eyewitness—account of the events of that third day.

But just like the Evangelist St. Luke in last week's Gospel, who told us that the parents of the Boy + Jesus searched for Him for three days, pointing to the Lord's death and resurrection—His being buried in the tomb for three days and rising on the third day—St. John also directs our attention to the purpose of our Lord's coming. Our Lord + Jesus came to suffer and die for our sins on the tree of the holy cross after perfectly fulfilling the Law. He came to be buried in the grave for three days. And in so doing, He would become our Bridegroom. He would become the Bridegroom of the Church through the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. He would join Himself to all those who clung to Him in faith.

He joins us to Himself through the faith in which we cling to Him. We look to Him for all good things. He supplies our daily needs; He supplies the "daily bread" for which we pray in the Lord's Prayer. He supplies all of our physical needs, just as He supplied the wine for the wedding in Cana of Galilee when the wine failed. But He also supplies our spiritual needs—the greater needs that we and all of mankind has—He gives us forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. He does this because He has become our Bridegroom. He richly and daily provides for the wants and needs of His Beloved Bride the Church. He gives us His Word and His Sacraments to create and sustain faith in us for Him.

By the wine and bread in the Sacrament of the Altar He gives us His true and substantial Body and Blood for the remission of all our sins. He provides a celebration of His victory over sin and death. He provides for us in this meal a foretaste of the eternal wedding feast of the Bridegroom—the Lamb of God—to His Bride the Church. Through this wine, which does not fail because it is the very Blood of the Lord + Jesus, and the bread which is His very Body, He unites us to Himself. We are united to Him just as a man and woman become one flesh in holy matrimony. The Church is united to the Bridegroom and they become united together. We become united to our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ.

This is a mystery. A mystery as deep and full of wonderful things to ponder as the Incarnation of our Lord in our flesh. It is as wonderful of a mystery as wine and bread being the Body and Blood of the Lord + Jesus, and giving remission of all our sins. Such is the mystery of the Bridegroom, the Lord + Jesus, uniting Himself to us, His Beloved Bride, the Church.

And like a loving Husband, in this Christian Church, He daily and richly forgives the sins of all those who cling to Him in faith. He supplies us with all of our spiritual and physical needs, because He loves us. This love is shown to us by His taking upon Himself our flesh in order that He might redeem

us from sin and the grave. He redeems us from these by fulfilling the Law which we cannot; that is, He redeems us by being without sin. And then He takes that perfect and sinless Person to the punishment of the cross—the punishment we deserve—and suffers and dies in our place on the tree of the holy cross. And then He was laid in the tomb for three days. On the third day He burst open the tomb of us all. On the third day He united us, and all those who believe on Him, to Himself. He became our Bridegroom, so that He might provide for all of the wants and needs of His Beloved Bride, the Church.

In this Christian Church, the wine does not fail, for it is the very Blood of the Lord + Jesus. This wine, which is His Blood, gives and offers exactly what He says it gives and offers. It gives us the great spiritual gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. This Blood of our Lord + Jesus given to us in wine, along with His Body in the bread, imparts to us the Holy Ghost. When we receive this meal in faith, we receive the Holy Ghost Who strengthens and preserves our faith in the Lord + Jesus, and creates in us love for our Bridegroom, the Lord + Jesus, and love for our fellowman, our fellow members of the Church, our Lord's Bride.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us come to this wedding feast which has been prepared for all of us who have been baptized, and who in faith hunger and thirst after the righteousness—the freedom from sins—that this meal provides. For our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ has come down from Heaven and taken upon Himself our flesh, in order that He might reveal Himself to us as both God and Man. This God and man in One Person has become our Bridegroom, and like a faithful Husband, provides for all of our needs, both physical and spiritual. In this miracle that takes place at this altar, He reveals that He is our Lord and Savior, Who has come to be with us and draw us to Himself in order to give us forgiveness, life and salvation. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!