

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, Wash.
January 17, 2010**

John 2:1-11

**Christ Reveal His Glory at the Wedding of
Cana**

1. *He is all-powerful*
2. *He is merciful*
3. *He is the object of our trust*

**Hymns: 80 – 91 – Distribution: 82, 312 –
84 (vv. 1,4,5)**

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

John 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." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. 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 realize 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 at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

How do you truly know what a person is like? You have some options to choose from:

1. Their words – You can listen to what they tell you about their past and their likes/dislikes. But, you know how people can bend the truth about themselves!
2. Their friends – You could talk to people who know that person to find out what they're like. But, these people are their friends, after all, and perhaps their opinions are a bit biased.
3. The best way = Their actions – The best way to find out what a person is like is by spending time with them and seeing their actions in different situations. In fact, they say that the very best way to see what a person is like is how they react in crisis situations.

In our Epiphany reading for today, Jesus shows us a glimpse of what he is like. The setting is a crisis. It happens at a wedding. **Let's see in action what the Christ is like, as he reveals his glory at a small town called Cana. Jesus will teach us three things in this account about who he is.**

1 – We read, “*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.'*” It had been three days since Jesus had called some of his disciples, making it a group of about 5-6 disciples that he now had. Interestingly enough, soon after they begin their relationship, Jesus takes the time

to go to a wedding with them! We soon see a reason why. The wine at the reception is gone.

To learn our first lesson, we need to look at this account from Mary's perspective. It seems that Mary might have had some type of role at this wedding. The account begins by saying that she was at the wedding and that Jesus and his disciples had been invited too, looking at her as the primary individual. Some wonder if she was related to the wedding couple? Or if she had a role in the food? People especially wonder this because she acted with both Jesus and the servants to try to fix this problem.

What did she expect from Jesus? He hadn't done a miracle yet. What kind of help might she want him to provide?

I think we can confidently say she expected a miracle. After all, 31 years before she had heard Gabriel's announcement that, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God*" (Luke 1). She had "pondered" the events of the first Christmas in her heart. She had heard the words of Simeon and Anna in the Temple at Jesus' Presentation. She witnessed him as a 12-year old talking with the religious scholars in the Temple. She very well may have seen the sight at his baptism in the Jordan River. We can safely surmise that she expected a miracle, not for Jesus to go to the wine store in the next village. She knew he had the power!

So Mary comes to Jesus for help. She broaches the subject in an interesting way. She simply says to Jesus, "*They have no more wine.*" Jesus responds, "*Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.*" Jesus gave her a reminder after her words to him. He gently questions her involvement in informing him

of the situation that he's very aware of as the Son of God, and tells her that he can and will indeed act when the time is right. The reminder for her was a good one. For three decades she had been the mother and teacher for Jesus. But circumstances have changed. He has entered his public ministry, and is functioning as her Savior, Teacher, and Messiah. From all outward signs, Mary humbly accepts this reminder and optimistically tells the servants, "*Do whatever he tells you.*"

Jesus certainly knew he had the power to act when the proper time came. Soon Jesus would make use of the six huge water pots that were nearby for the Jews to use in the elaborate washings that were prescribed by the traditions that had developed through the OT. He had the servants fill them with plain water, all the way to the brim, so that it was clear that nothing would be added to the contents. And immediately he had them draw out the liquid to take it to the man in charge, who marveled at the quality of the wine. In a moment's time, Jesus did something that winemakers around Yakima and other wine valleys labor months and years over! It was a trifle for him, for **what POWER he possesses. This is our first lesson today. Jesus is indeed the all-powerful One. And this all-powerful One is on our side as well!**

This is a vital lesson for us today because we do not have all the power. Sometimes we think we do, but then our world can come crashing down and show us we do not.

For example, this past week I read an article about famous people who have been forced to declare bankruptcy. I was surprised to read that Billy Sims declared bankruptcy back in the 1990's. He was a Heisman trophy winner as the best college football player in 1978 and played for the Detroit Lions. He had the spotlight of a celebrity life that many crave and that makes

a person feel invincible. Yet he was forced to declare bankruptcy less than six years after his playing days, and he sold his trophies, including the Heisman! Can you imagine how that will teach you that you are not all-powerful?

The list continued to shock me:

- Bjorn Borg – In 2006 he sold his trophies and rackets to pay off debt
- Michael Vick – In 2006 he had \$16 million of assets and \$20 million of debt – After being paid \$11 million in his rookie year!
- Johnny Unitas
- Wayne Newton
- Burt Reynolds
- Willie Nelson
- Donald Trump
- Merle Haggard
- Jerry Lewis
- Tony Gwynn

I don't know what happened to each of them, but for many it must have been a wake-up call that they were not as powerful as they had thought!

That sums up our situation in this life. Oftentimes we think we're in control and we have all the power. How false that is! Only our Lord is the all-powerful One. Many times in life we're reminded that we don't have all the power:

- Sickness comes
- Financial situations change
- Death strikes
- Family problems occur

The way that we are the most helpless of all is as sinners before our holy God. We were born in a sinful condition

and have committed sins since then. We are guilty, caught dead to rights! Our enemies – the devil, death, and guilt – are more powerful than we ever will be naturally, and we are condemned because of our sinful condition. Any funeral you attend will vividly teach you that.

However, look at what Christ is like. **He is the all-powerful One! And the all-powerful One has done great things for you.** First of all, he took our sin on himself when we were his enemies and he paid for it on the cross. He died for you and saved you! And now the all-powerful One has the help we need in our troubles and hardships of life. Remember this when you're reminded that you're not all-powerful!

2 – We learn another lesson from this first miracle of Christ. After all, power isn't everything. And it's not comforting in and of itself. For example, you might know (or have known) a bully at school who had a lot of power and muscle. But I don't think that fact alone was too comforting for you! Another quality is needed to comfort us, and we see a second quality in Jesus' first miracle.

To learn this lesson, we need to put ourselves in someone else's shoes from that day: The wedding couple. An embarrassing situation had developed. In Jesus' day, wedding feasts were quite joyful and extended events. The steps of getting married included:

- The couple becoming engaged and saying their vows to one another
- After a time, the groom would come with his companions and fetch the bride to take her to their new home.
- A wedding feast would then occur, lasting anywhere from 1-7 days

During those days, it was the joy and privilege of the host family to provide the guests with fine food and with wine. Wine was a staple drink for their culture. Also, in the Middle Eastern culture of Bible times, hospitality was a huge part of their life. It was considered “business as usual” to give guests the red carpet treatment in Jesus’ day.

Now consider Jesus’ role at that wedding. He’s a guest. He came to share the joy, and by all rights could simply be in the background like any other guest. He is not the host. Yet look at the all-powerful One’s attitude. He is also the merciful One:

- He’s willing to help
- He has generous help to give – 120 to 180 gallons of help!
- And as the master of the feast found out, he had quality help to give also with the type of wine he provided.

This is so typical of Jesus, the merciful One. Later he would show this mercy in his ministry. He would show this in busy times, when he would accept the children brought to him to be blessed. He would rise up from his tired sleep to still the storm for his terrified disciples. He would leave the crowd to go with the father Jairus, whose daughter lay ill and dying. **Our second lesson in this account is that Jesus, the all-powerful One, is also the MERCIFUL One.**

We can find comfort in the fact that the merciful One is on our side today too. He invites us to call on him for help. Psalm 50:15 tells us, “*Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you will honor me.*”

Yet are you always confident about that? Are you ever tempted to doubt his mercy? Are you tempted to question whether God knows what he is doing? It’s quite common for people of our world to question God’s mercy, especially after

seeing scenes such as those in Haiti this past week. What can we say about this?

God’s is evident to us in a couple ways:

- 1) When we were sinners, Jesus didn’t show a lack of mercy and say things like –
 - “I hope those sinners find some help from someone.”
 - “I hope those sinners get what they deserve.”

He came to earth willingly for us as the merciful One to win our salvation! He willingly paid the price of our sins.

- 2) In the midst of the turbulent end times that we live in and the calls to repentance that God give us and our world, we have concrete promises from our merciful Lord. Two memorable promises come from Romans 8:

- “*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)*
- “*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.*” (Romans 8:28)
- “*I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.*” (Jeremiah 29:11)

It's interesting that in the book of Revelation, two reactions are seen in people when end times catastrophes happen as signs of the end. Some people curse God. They shake their fist and then go back to their unbelieving, immoral ways. Others put their trust in him that he will see them through the evil last days and bring them safely to heaven. May we have a heart of faith as we live in these end times!

3 – We see one more lesson in this first miracle of Jesus. We read in v. 11, *“This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.”* To learn this third lesson, we must look at this wedding from the perspective of Jesus' disciples. Think about them for a moment. They certainly must have been eager and enthusiastic. They were new and young.

We learn a lesson from Jesus' purpose in performing this miracle from John's account. He calls it a SEMEION in Greek. This actually isn't the word for “miracle,” but a “sign.” What is the purpose of a sign? Or, to use a related word, what is the purpose of a signal? A signal is intended to draw attention and deliver a message. This sign was not seen by:

- All the guests present at the reception
- The bride and groom
- The master
- The people of Jerusalem
- The religious leaders of the day

Jesus purposely did it in a way that certain individuals would see at this proper time: His disciples. We see that the purpose was achieved. The faith that had begun in their hearts was strengthened by this sign. In fact, the occasion was so memorable to John that he records this wedding event as it properly was to him, with Jesus as the main

character! Usually at weddings, a single guest is not considered to be the focal person of the day. But here, **Jesus has shown himself to be the One who is the OBJECT OF OUR TRUST, the most important person present at the wedding.**

We see this third lesson this Epiphany. Jesus is revealed in our readings as the One we must put our trust in. In this account today, we see that it has been passed down by the grace of God for us to read. It is intended to strengthen our faith. We see Jesus' power, his mercy, his timing, and his purpose. We also will see this as we continue to learn of him in God's Word. Our faith will always be strengthened by those means!

We will also find Jesus a reliable object of our faith by the way he leads us in our Christian lives. We will see God's guiding hand. There may even be people here today who have stories from their own lives about how God has directed their steps. You might recall situations where God has guided you, perhaps in the way:

- The way you met your spouse
- The way a job choice or family decision worked out for your good
- The way you were spared from an accident
- The remarkable way that God brought a birth about in your family
- The way an illness was dealt with
- Or even the way God brought a loved one safe to heaven

May we see the One who did this first miracle as the One who is DESERVING OF OUR TRUST. He is the One who still speaks to us in his Word and who will direct our steps through this life until we're safe with him in heaven!

As we close our look at this first miracle of Christ, it's interesting that Scripture points ahead to another wedding feast. Isaiah 25:6 says, "*On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines.*" The wedding feast mentioned is none other than heaven, where a picture of wine, food, and enjoyment is pictured.

Thank the Lord that this has been provided for by the One who is:

- 1) The all-powerful One**
- 2) The merciful One**
- 3) The One deserving our trust**

May we rejoice that Christ has come to pay for this banquet. And may we look forward to the day when we will enjoy the banquet that he has prepared! Amen.