

“The Wedding of the Year”

John 2: 1-11

I have a confession to make. I have never really liked this story. Sure I know that this is Jesus’ first miracle in the Gospel of John. And sure I know that it has great symbolism to help inspire my faith, symbolism like on the third day, Jesus performed his first miracle just like on the third day, he rose from the grave. I know all these things but still I have never really liked this story.

Maybe it is because I don’t like the way Jesus talks to his mom. I want to say, “Jesus, she is only pointing out that they are out of wine. Why are you snapping at her like that? Like any good Southerner, I know you don’t talk to your mama like that- that is not unless you mind getting your mouth washed out with soap or getting one of those looks, you know those looks that let you know you are in big trouble and you are going to get it when we get home.

Or maybe the reason that I have never really liked this story is because of the miracle itself. I have always wondered what exactly is the point of this miracle. It is not like the other miracles in the Gospel of John. In those miracles, people’s lives were changed. People who were blind could now see. People who were lame were given the ability to walk again. People who needed healing received healing. But in this miracle, Jesus’ first miracle, nothing really changes. In fact, no one

except the disciples and the servants know that a miracle has even taken place. All the story tells us is that the servants fill up the jars with water, take them to the steward who realizes that it is very good wine and that it should have been served first. All we are told is that the disciples saw this and believed.

And unlike all the other miracles Jesus' performed, no one makes a confession of faith. No one says, "Jesus, You truly are the Son of God" after tasting this good vintage of wine. All we are told is that Jesus revealed his glory. But how?

Just exactly how did Jesus reveal his glory? No lives were changed. No one is made whole. No one confesses Jesus to be the Son of God. It is almost like no miracle ever really happened. All we know is one minute there is no wine and then the next there is more than enough wine to go around, there is more than enough wine to keep the party going for days, there is more than enough wine to keep the celebration going. But just exactly how does this miracle reveal Jesus' glory?

Maybe that's it. Maybe that's the real reason I don't like this story. It leaves me wondering. It leaves me wanting more. It leaves me angry and annoyed. Maybe the real reason I don't like this story is because I want Jesus to announce himself in his first miracle, you know, something big, something spectacular, something that makes the people pay attention. Maybe the real reason I don't like this story is because I want Jesus to do something that changes lives, that makes the people

understand that the Kingdom of God is here, front and center. Maybe the real reason I don't like this story is because when Jesus performs his first miracle, I want him to be the Son of God that I have come to expect him to be and he just doesn't meet those expectations.

I think if I'm being honest that by simply changing water into wine, Jesus disappoints me, that by simply performing this amazing transformation which no one sees happening, Jesus aggravates me, that by simply making sure that the party will go on with more than enough wine without taking credit for the miracle or without calling attention to himself or without being the Son of God that I have come to expect him to be, Jesus fails to meet my expectations and just leaves me feeling angry and annoyed.

And as I have continued on my journey of faith, I have come to discover that that is the true miracle happening in this story, the miracle that the Gospel story, the story that tells us about God's love and grace through the gift of Jesus Christ, does not and will not fit our expectations nor will it play by our rules. The miracle of the Gospel story is that it does not do what we expect it to do nor does it ask our opinion about what should or should not be done to announce the Kingdom of God. The true miracle of this story is that Jesus invites us to step out of our confining expectations, our restricting rules and regulations and to experience the

freeing abundance of God's grace that allows the celebration of life through joy and love to keep on going.

That's why John tells this story, John wants us to understand that the Kingdom of God and the Gospel message are a part of a whole mysterious and wonderful story that is always unfolding each and every moment of our lives. And in those moments, there is always an opportunity to experience the blessing of God's wholeness, an opportunity to experience the abundant grace of God, an opportunity to experience the ordinary miracles of God, miracles that we usually miss because we are expecting something else, something bigger, something more, something with flashing lights, something that grabs our attention and says loud and clear, "This is a miracle from God. Pay attention!" All of which usually doesn't happen and we are left feeling angry and annoyed which only makes us feel more angry and annoyed and blaming God for never showing up or for never being around which isn't the case. What usually happens is that we just missed God and all the amazing transformations and miracles because we were expecting something else.

The thing John wants us to realize is that the true miracle of this story is that we as people of faith are surrounded by miracles each and every day, miracles that free us, miracles that heal us, miracles that allow the celebration of life to continue with joy and thanksgiving.

For John, the point and purpose of this miracle is to free us and to get us ready to expect the unexpected in Jesus' ministry here on earth. The point of Jesus' first miracle is to open our eyes to God's glory that is already in our midst and for us as people of faith to believe.

John wants us to realize that this miracle of changing water into wine happens as part of an every lifetime celebration. He knows that at some point, everyone has either been to or will be in a wedding and he wants us to realize that in these lifetime moments, and in all the moments in between, we have Jesus in our lives, standing in our midst, revealing his glory, if we would only open our eyes and see. John wants us to realize that in every moment of our lives we have the capacity to experience the Kingdom of God in our midst if we would just let go of our big expectations and truly see the grace of God that fills our lives.

Sure Jesus could have snapped his fingers at that wedding celebration and done something really miraculous. He could have had wine flowing down the walls, and the light of God blazing in the midst of that celebration, but that was not the point. The point that John wants us to understand is that Jesus came to reveal the will of God for the people of God and he is not going to play by our rules and regulations. And Jesus is not going to meet our expectations by being the Son of God we expect him to be. And Jesus isn't going to ask our opinion on how the miracles announcing the Kingdom of God should be performed.

And in reality this should come as no surprise because not once did Jesus fulfill the people's expectations. Not once did Jesus play by the people's rules. He never did say to the people Pay attention! I'm the Son of God! He never did call all the people to attention and say, "Get ready. I'm about to perform a miracle that confirms for you that I am the Son of God." No, Jesus came to reveal the will of God for the people of God by meeting with the people in ordinary ways, like breaking bread with them at the table, teaching them on the side of a mountain, embracing them as children of God in their every day ordinary moments of their lives because Jesus understood that every moment is an opportunity to experience the miracles of God if we would only open our eyes to the glory of God that surrounds us every day of our lives.

And that good news is as true today as it was back then and I cannot help but think of how it is the ordinary miracles that we experience each and every day that challenge us and call us to be the people of God, miracles that help us become the people that God created us to be, miracles that remind of the justice and peace of God's kingdom that is available for all of children. I cannot help but think of the ordinary miracles, miracles that we don't even know are occurring in our lives and how they can free us to let go our confining rules and regulation and experience the grace of God.

I cannot help but think of these ordinary miracles that happen to ordinary people and how when we pay attention, they truly do reveal the glory of God in our midst such as the miracle that happened for Rosa Parks and then later Martin Luther King, Jr. As I was preparing this week, I came across an article about MLK and how he was so inspired by Rosa Parks that he gained strength and became the voice of the Civil Rights Movement. The article shared how an ordinary woman experienced a miraculous transformation, a transformation no one could really see take place, a transformation that was not big or flashy, a transformation that really began with the word no. No, she would not give up her seat. No she would not move to the back of the bus. No she would not be bullied anymore because she was a person of worth.

that miracle, that amazing transformation, that changing of bitter injustice into sweet tasting justice, was seen by just a few, and it revealed the will of God for the people of God. It revealed that there was more than enough grace to go around. That miracle that took place on an bus that Rosa rode every day, kept the celebration of life going through joy, love, and most importantly by not playing by the rules or expectations.

I cannot help but think we have the glory of the Lord revealed to us each day. All we have to do is let go of our expectations and allow Jesus to be the Son

of God God created him to be, the Son of God he shared with us, the Son of God
we have come to experience him to be.

May we open our eyes and just believe. Amen.