

“What does this have to do with me?”

## John 2: 1-11

This week's text is about one of Jesus' more familiar miracle stories. It is the story of Jesus turning water into wine at a local wedding to which he and his disciples had been invited. To tell you the truth, I have always found this miracle a little confusing especially since Jesus didn't intend to perform this particular miracle in the first place. In fact, when his mother tells him to do something about the situation, the situation being that the party had run out of wine, Jesus says, “it is not my hour.” Jesus knew that the timing wasn't right to reveal himself as the Son of God. Jesus knew the world wasn't ready to see him that way and the world certainly wasn't ready to experience him that way either.

So why this miracle? Or should I say non-miracle miracle? Because after all, no one really noticed it. No one noticed the water being turned into wine. Jesus just tells the servants to fill up some jars that are laying around with water and then take the jars to the chief steward.

They do this. The chief steward tastes the wine and just assumes the bridegroom was being cheap, trying to save the good stuff only for himself and his

family for a later time when everyone one else had gone home, too drunk to know what had happened.

No one really notices this miracle. The party keeps on going like nothing ever happened. The wine keeps on flowing and everyone is happy. No one really notices or experiences a miracle.

Unlike so many other miracle stories, where lives are changed, people are healed, and the crowd is amazed, nothing like that happens in this story. In this story, the story of Jesus' first miracle in the Gospel of John, no one notices. No one is aware of the Kingdom of God in their midst.

I keep coming back to one question as I read this text... so why this miracle? What's so important about this story that only the Gospel of John tells it? What is it about this non-miracle miracle that John wants us to notice as people of faith?

As I've lived with this text this past week, I have come to realize that the answer to these questions can also be found in Jesus' response to his mother. To his mother's request that he do something about the situation, in addition to telling her that it is not his time, Jesus also says, "What does this, meaning running out of wine, have to do with me?"

Now "keep in mind, for a moment, the scene: Jesus and his disciples are at a wedding and the hosts run out of wine. Inconvenient, we will probably

acknowledge, and yes perhaps embarrassing, especially when people came to the event expecting an open bar. But really in the grand scheme of things, is it really such a big deal? Is it something that Jesus should really care about in that moment? After all he has got better things to do to, you know like be the Son of God. Is it really a big deal? Does Jesus really have to do something about this situation?

The answer is yes. Because at that time, in that place, in that moment, running out of wine too early isn't just a social faux pas, it's a disaster. Wine isn't merely a social lubricant. You see, it's a sign of the harvest. It is a sign of God's abundance. It is a sign of the joy and gladness that we feel when we experience God's welcoming hospitality."

So when they run short on wine they run short on blessing. When they run short on wine, it gives the impression that God is not present in that moment, in that space. When they run out of wine, it gives the impression that God doesn't care. And that is the real need and reason for this non-miracle miracle.

It is important that someone does something about the situation. The running out of wine says something about God that isn't true. The running out of wine says something that runs counter to what we know and have experienced of our God.

If all of a sudden the sign that stands as a testimony to God's abundance runs out, then there definitely is a problem. The lack gives the message that God's love

is limited, that God's grace can and does come to an end. The lack of blessing, the lack of abundance, the lack of joy gives the impression that God doesn't care. If all of a sudden the one sign that tells all the world of God's welcoming hospitality disappears, then yeah, there is a problem and someone, anyone should do something about it.

Someone like Jesus as the Son of God. Or maybe all it takes is someone else, someone who knows, who has experienced the complete opposite message when it comes to God's grace, the complete opposite message when it comes to God's love, someone who knows that the welcoming hospitality of God never ends, someone like you and me.

As people of faith, we cannot let this broken hurting world think God doesn't care. We cannot let this broken hurting world think that God isn't working in this world to bring about healing and wholeness to all of God's creation, especially when we know the complete opposite is true.

At a time when we seem to be living in a world where we are running low on certain things, things like compassion and respect, things like hope and grace, at a time when we seem to be living in a world where we are running low on common decency when it comes to how we treat each other, how we speak to each other, as people of faith, we must send a different message. We must give a different

message. We must show the world that God's abundance of grace and love are still here for all of God's children, regardless of the situation at hand.

As people of faith, we are called to tap into the power of God and fill the voids we see. It is time for us to realize that discipleship, being followers of Jesus Christ, is not about sitting around waiting for miracles to happen. It is not about waiting for someone else to change the world. Discipleship, being followers of Jesus Christ is about being attentive to the Kingdom of God in our midst. It is about seeing a need. It is about proclaiming to this world that God does still care, that our God still is present. It is about proclaiming to all that our God is still working in this world to bring healing and wholeness to all of God's children.

As I look around at the hurt and brokenness that seems to be filing our world, at the hate and hurt that seems to be overwhelming our world, as I see all this and hear people say, "What does this have to do with me", I am reminded of a quote by Martin Luther King which says "We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on the wheels on inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts of men and women who were willing to be coworkers with God, and without that hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right."

The time is always ripe to do right.

Even if the Kingdom of God has not been fully realized here on earth, it is here in our midst. The world needs, we need something that points to God's grace, something that points to God's love, something that becomes a sign of God's presence for all of God's children. This can still be done right here, right now and we are the ones called to perform these non-miracle miracles, things that people may not even notice but certainly point to the Kingdom of God in our midst. We can still show the world that God still cares, that God is still at work in this world bringing healing and wholeness, that God's abundance of love and grace is still here for all of God's children to experience.

Just like it was done this past week for people who were forgotten and ignored, people who no one saw, people who no one noticed. Just like it was done this past week for people who had been pushed to the margins, all because a little boy saw the homelessness in his community and asked, "What does this have to do with me?" 7-year-old Max Freeman passed out 165 blankets to homeless men and women this past Sunday. He did this because he saw them standing out in the cold and he asked his mom, why?

Here's what I love about this non-miracle miracle. Instead of saying this doesn't concern me. This young boy saw brokenness and hurt and decided to do something about it.

"It started I'd say about in December," said Freeman.

He brought the idea to his mother who then asked Faith Christian Church to help make it possible. The congregation organized a blanket drive.

"It was a little bit hard because we had to buy a lot of blankets, but we got it," said Freeman.

"God used this little boy and we listened to him," said Faith Christian Church pastor Greg Hamlin.

Hamlin says Freeman's effort took off far past Wichita. A church in Indianapolis heard about his wish and donated hundreds of dollars.

"It grew and grew and grew to what it is today and we didn't imagine it would be this big," said Hamlin.

Altogether, Freeman's idea raised \$550 dollars, allowing the church to make a trip to the store to buy a truckload of blankets. For those on the receiving end, the gift comes with gratitude.

"It make a whole lot of difference," said Lasonya Harris, a homeless women who received a blanket. "Thank you so much. Because without you there would be nothing."

The Kingdom of God is in our midst if we would only pay attention. Because it shines like a light in the darkness, coming "through the tireless efforts of men and women who were willing to be coworkers with God" Now is the time to send a different message to the world. Now is the time to show a different message to the world. Now is the time to remember that it always the good time to do something right. Amen.