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**January 14, 2018**  
**"Word of Abundance"**  
**John 2: 1-12**

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' <sup>6</sup> Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there for a few days.

One of the things that Leanne and I get to do that's part of our job that's a lot of fun, is weddings. We get to see and preside at all kinds of weddings. Outdoor weddings, traditional church weddings, stripped down casual weddings, formal evening weddings, and everything in between. Each one represents countless hours of preparation and thought. There are many details that the bride and groom and wedding planners pour over to make it one special time.

For instance, we were at Leanne's niece's wedding in Arizona last fall. This was a great example of an event that was orchestrated to make sure that everyone there had a memorable time. Each detail was in order to make the experience for the wedding party flawless and fun. Small touches were taken to ensure everyone felt special and appreciated. Every detail big and small was



thought through. And, that's not to mention the fireworks that went off in the valley below when the bride and groom kissed.

So it would have been a major faux pas for a detail to be off. It would have jarred the flow of the night, it would have distracted from the experience. Just like being at a five-day wedding extravaganza that was a first century wedding, and running out of wine before the celebration was over. It would have been an embarrassment for the hosts. The bride and groom would not have wanted this to interrupt the party!

When you think about it, this is sort of an odd miracle, isn't it? Turning the water into wine. Certainly, it's one of the most memorable of Jesus' miracles. But in the gospel of John it serves a distinct purpose, and it was chosen to point to a greater truth. It's one of seven signs in the gospel. Each one is a miracle by Christ that points to who he is as the Messiah. Remember, this is the gospel that featured this opener, "The Word became flesh and lived among us." (John 1: 14) Well, this begs questions doesn't it? What does it mean that God became one of us? What does it mean that God walked and talked and interacted with us in Jesus? The signs, like turning the water into wine, seek to answer this question, "who is this Jesus?" And, so we seek to begin to answer this question this morning with the end the passage in mind, as it says in v 11: This sign was performed in order to reveal Christ's glory, and with the result that his disciples believed in him.

So this story points towards the nature of Jesus. It reveals his glory. And if it reveals Christ's glory it does so in a marvelous, idiosyncratic way, but in a somewhat ordinary setting. It begins with an odd exchange between a mother and her son, something that we might see nowadays between any one of us bantering with his or her mother. Proof that even Jesus had a mom and had to mind her, no matter how big britches were. Second, it occurs in a unique setting, that is also all too human – a wedding. And third there are no blind men, lame ones, ailing children, or lepers to heal, instead there's massive jugs of water turned into wine. And not just a little wine, mind you, up to 180 gallons of the stuff!

Here's some takeaways from all of this. If these are the circumstances through which Jesus shows his glory, then I think we can all take heart. If Jesus doesn't need to display his glory through brilliant displays of wonderous healings

and cosmic signs, but rather chooses a humble wedding in a small town in Galilee, that says something about what sort of savior we follow. Because it means that God cares about ordinary people and ordinary things. Jesus went to weddings. Jesus hung out with his friends. Jesus went to the wedding reception. He joined the party. And when the wine runs out, he cares.


God cares about you and me. In our run of the mill, unexceptional, certainly not out of the ordinary lives, God cares. God chose to show his glory in an ordinary wedding, on an ordinary day, in an unexceptional place in a small town, in an out of the way corner of the world. If that's true, then maybe God wants to show his glory here, now, in this place, and in my life, and in your life, and in the life of your friends, and your family.

We human beings are all too skilled at compartmentalizing. We want to zone out our life. We want to zone out a work zone, a family zone, a parent zone, a kid zone, a friend zone, a dating zone, a private zone, a fun zone, a faith and church zone. We like to keep these zones distinct. We want to keep the work zone out of the family zone. We want to keep the fun zone out of the parent zone. And so on. But to God looking in at us, all of those zones are no barriers. God wants to inhabit all of them. God wants to show glory in all of them.

Let me explain, don't we have certain areas that we want to zone God out of? Either unconsciously or purposely, we seek to partition it away. To hide it away from God because we're embarrassed or ashamed. Or we think we're doing just fine on our own, thank you very much. Or, no thank you God, we don't need you involved in that zone of our life. Or, maybe it's just neglect. As in, we used to be intimately involved with God in that area of our life at one point, and now we've just, well, drifted.

But God inhabited a humble wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus joined the party and made sure that there was an abundance of wine. Jesus cared. What if this means that Jesus wants to inhabit our humble weddings? Our ordinary jobs? Our relationships with our friends? Kids? Co-workers? Spouse?

I want to challenge us this morning to let God in. I want to invite us to make the decision to choose to have Jesus at the party. Take for instance, your relationship with your spouse, if happen to be married. What if you were to



commit to making your relationship with God a central feature of your marriage? What if you were to choose a devotional resource like “These Days,” “Upper Room,” or “Jesus Calling,” to read together. And not only that, that you would discuss faith together, and commit to pray together daily. You would be inviting Jesus’ glory into your marriage. You would be seeking the blessing of Christ in your lives. Maybe you’d find yourself changing in your hearts and spirits. Maybe you’d find yourself being just a bit more patient with your wife. Maybe you’d find yourself becoming a better listener to your husband. Maybe you’d find a renewed sense of joy and purpose in your relationship. I believe your marriage would flourish.

You don’t have to be married to make this happen. There are a number of ways God can touch your life if we simply let the love of Christ into each zone of our lives. What would it mean to be intentional about inviting Jesus into your work? What would it mean to pray before you left for the office each morning, to ask God to inhabit your life at work that day – to pray for patience, good judgment, a positive attitude?

Do you see where I’m going with this? God wants to inhabit your life. And the sign of the water turned into wine at the wedding feast is that this habitation is characterized by grace. The fact that there were 180 gallons is a sign of grace, immense unmerited love, poured out. It’s a sign of sacrificial love that foreshadows the cross. It’s exquisite. It’s beautiful. It’s about wholehearted commitment to our savior. It’s about being all-in. It’s about holding nothing back in our devotion for God, and God’s love for us.

This isn’t a promise that life will be perfect. It’s not a guarantee that bad things won’t happen. But it is a guarantee that life can be lived differently. When we invite Jesus into our ordinary, humble, broken lives, we invite a savior who walks with us, weeps with us, hurts with us, and yes, even parties at the feast with us. We choose to walk differently, because we have asked Christ’s blessing and love to shelter us and sustain us.

When I think about this, I think one of the ways to speak of this is in the ancient language of benediction. A benediction is from the Latin, meaning “good-words.” To speak a benediction is to speak good words over someone. It’s the final part of the worship service we celebrate each week. It’s not a prayer per se.

It's not a place where we close our eyes and fold our hands and are sober and quiet. It's a joyful pouring out of well wishes of good blessing on a person's life. I think that the wedding feast at Cana is Christ's benediction for us all. It's a pouring out of blessing. It's Christ's way of embodying the ancient Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6: 24-26, "The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." It's Jesus putting Paul's benediction from 2 Corinthians 13: 14, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all," into tangible form in wine overflowing from great clay flasks.

Is your life in need of a benediction poured over it? Could you benefit from the glory of Christ inhabiting your life? Are you ready to make a change, and stop looking to yourself, and begin looking towards Jesus? There's no better time than the present to look around you and see that Jesus is here at the feast alongside of you. He's telling you to fill the flasks with water and prepare for a sign. He's asking for your whole-hearted devotion. And he's ready to pour out his love for you. Are you ready?

Alleluia, and Amen.