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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
January 20, 2019  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
Hymns: 239; 134; 755; 309

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup>And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

<sup>4</sup>Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

<sup>5</sup>His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*."

<sup>6</sup>Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup>And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*. <sup>9</sup>When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. <sup>10</sup>And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

<sup>11</sup> This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Beginnings can reveal a great deal. --

Is someone to be taken seriously? Is there really something different going on now than what was going on previously? Beginnings can indeed reveal a great deal for us. If it is the beginning of a marriage and the individuals in the marriage continue to behave as if they were single one finds cause for concern. One might see a need to intervene. If one is beginning a professional career others might watch to be sure that the "rookie" gets off on a good start, without serious missteps. The use of the word "rookie" should not limit our thoughts to sports, it is equally true of those beginning in the medical field, law enforcement field, practice of law, or in the ministry of the gospel.

Our text this morning takes us to the very beginnings of Jesus' public ministry. This is merely days after John the Baptist pointed Jesus out to a handful of his disciples exclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," (John 1:29) Two of them followed after Jesus, and that two became five as they shared this wondrous news with others. Together they traveled north from Judea to Galilee, where Jesus, as well as these new disciples, resided. There they were invited to a wedding along with Jesus' mother and other relatives. It was the third day after these new disciples began to follow Jesus that they first went to this wedding. Jewish wedding customs were long and involved, with the feasting and family celebrations often lasting seven days.

This is the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, and what our text reports is the beginning, the very beginning of signs that Jesus would perform in the course of His ministry, all to lead others to the inescapable conclusion essential to faith unto salvation.

**THEME: This Beginning of Signs Reveals  
Jesus as Christ Our Savior.**

Our text tells us of Mary --

**I. Turning to Jesus for Help in Time of Need.**

Much has been made, and properly so, of the fact that Jesus' mere presence at this wedding was a great honor. The blessing of Jesus' presence is a great gift that each of us rejoices to possess in our Christian marriages and homes. However, this was the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, and it is very doubtful that Jesus was invited because the hosts thought of Jesus as the Christ. It is far more likely that they thought of Jesus as the builder, and a family friend.

There was someone present who did appreciate the fact that Jesus was the Christ, someone who had pondered many things in her heart as she watched her own Child grow. She also doubtless understood that He was now in that time of transition in which He was leaving the trades and beginning His public ministry. How could she not since her Son had been absent from home and the family business for more than six weeks! Yes, Mary understood that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God because that glorious truth had been revealed to her way back when the angel came and spoke to her of her coming Child be conceived of Holy Spirit as the power of the Highest would overshadow her. (Luke 1:35)

Now she saw a need, and she turned to Him who alone supplies all our needs of body and soul. Mary went to Jesus and reported to Jesus that this wedding feast had run out of wine. What our text reports next troubles some

people. It appears that Jesus rebukes His mother, seemingly putting her in her place. In a sense Jesus did just that, but not in a harsh or disrespectful manner. Mary approached Jesus as Jesus' mother, but now Jesus was fulfilling His office as Christ, Mary's Savior. He was no longer living under His mother, fulfilling her wishes, following her directions. Jesus, having begun His public ministry was the One who was to determine the course of His actions within His ministry. Jesus' response, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come," has nothing to do with Jesus' respect for His mother, and everything to do with making it clear that Jesus had to direct the ministry of the Christ.

Also it was not that Jesus was unwilling or unable to help. Jesus was and remains the One to whom all of us should turn for help in time of need. If Mary had been expecting Jesus to respond to her direction she continued to expect that He would help, but as He directed, not as she directed. Jesus saying His time had not yet come was clearly understood by Mary as not being a "no" but rather being a "not yet."

Isn't it true for all of us that we may tend to get a little, perhaps even more than a little presumptuous with the Lord when we do properly turn to Him in time of need? We not only seek help or deliverance in time of need, but we may also lay our solution before the Lord as the only properly thought out and timed solution for the distress in our lives. We need to understand our position before the Lord perhaps even more than Mary needed that lesson. The Lord cares for you. Never, ever doubt that. The Lord is both willing and able to help, to deliver. Never, ever doubt that. Finally, the Lord knows best the when and the how to bring us deliverance. When we are in distress, when we are in pain, when we feel, even see our lives collapsing around us because of sickness, or job loss, or even as a result of our own sinful folly, then is easy for us to doubt. It is then that the Lord would remind us that He

knows best, and He will deliver us from all our trouble.  
(Psalm 50:15, Psalm 34:6)

That is the first lesson regarding the glory of Christ that is brought home for us in this incident. The second is right there in Jesus' first miracle:

## **II. Jesus Christ Delivers.**

Mary had no doubt that Jesus the Christ, her Savior would deliver. In faith she told the servant staff that they should do whatever Jesus told them to do. We need to share Mary's confidence of faith. At times the things we are told to do by the Lord do not go along with what we think is obvious common sense. That may even be something as significant as baptizing a baby; common sense might tell us that babies can't understand what this is all about, or know anything that really matters about Jesus. Even as we know the power is in the Word of God, and with the Spirit in Baptism, so in all our ways we ought to trust Jesus' power and wisdom, confident that Jesus' delivers us from all our trouble.

We actually don't know how long a delay intervened between Mary approaching Jesus, and Jesus performing the miracle of changing water into wine. Since Jewish wedding feasts could go on for days it could be possible that it was the next day before Jesus acted, or it could have been a matter of minutes. What is essential for us to know is that it happened when and how Jesus in His love and in His wisdom determined it was the right time. There could have been practical reasons for Jesus to wait, perhaps the waterpots weren't yet available; more likely there were spiritual reasons for Jesus to wait, that the timing of the miracle was necessary for the strengthening of someone's faith. We do know that Jesus did act and that His actions were glorious and a blessing to the newlyweds. The six pots, some of them large, some even larger, holding 20 or 30 gallons apiece were filled to the brim according to Jesus' instruction. Samples were then drawn from the pots and taken to the man supervising the

wedding banquet. We also know that what he tasted was the best of wines, and that he was so surprised by the quality of this wine that he summoned the bridegroom to report his astonishment that such fine wine would be served so late in the wedding feast.

What the Lord does is always good. *What the Lord does is always good!* He cares for you. Put your trust in Him and you shall not be put to shame. That was how Jesus' miracle worked out for the bridal couple that were in a very embarrassing position that could have shamed them before family and community. You might think they could have gotten over that. We don't really know one way or the other about that; what we do know is that Jesus cared for them, and took care of them, even if their crisis wasn't earth shattering. And so He cares for you even when the emergency, the disaster is only looming large in our own eyes. He cares and He delivers with quality. What the Lord does is always good!

The effect upon others is also significant. The closing words of our text report:

### **III. His Disciples Believe in Him.**

So John's summary of the impact of this event is reported for our edification: *"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."* (v.11) The disciples that we know were following Jesus at this point were Peter, and his brother Andrew, John, and Philip, and Nathanael. They had all already confessed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah who was to come into the world. This event broadened their understanding and deepened their faith in Jesus as the Christ. In the coming three and half years they would witness so much more, so much that others would also see that can only lead to the one conclusion: *"He has done all things well!"* (Mark 7:37) The Apostle John near the end of this gospel would write: *"Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that*

*you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”* (John 20:30-31)

In many ways we are in the same position which these early disciples were in; we already believe and confess that Jesus is the Christ our Savior. And yet the Holy Spirit would have us continue to *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter 3:18) And so these and a variety of other miracles which Jesus did are reported in the Scriptures that we might comprehend His glory, not simply in His ability to do wondrous things, but in His compassion, in His wisdom, in His enduring love, all of which ultimately led Jesus to the cross where He suffered and died for us, that is in our place, and for our salvation.

As we make our way through this life with its trials and temptations we need our faith reinforced by the Spirit, and the Spirit works through the Word, through this gospel which reveals for us the magnitude of the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

*“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”* (v. 11) and by the Spirit’s grace and power **WE** believe in Him!

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.