

ESF, Lord's Day service message
1/8/2016

Jesus, The Lord of Joy
Text: John 2:1-11

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."⁴ "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,⁹ 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 aside¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Years ago, when Johnny Carson was the host of The Tonight Show he interviewed an eight year old boy. The boy was asked to appear because he had rescued two friends in a coal mine outside his hometown in West Virginia. As Johnny questioned the boy, it became apparent to him and the audience that the young man was a Christian. So Johnny asked him if he attended Sunday school. When the boy said he did Johnny inquired, "What are you learning in Sunday school?" "Last week," came his reply, "our lesson was about when Jesus went to a wedding and turned water into wine." The audience roared, but Johnny tried to keep a straight face. Then he said, "And what did you learn from that story?" The boy

squirmed in his chair. It was apparent he hadn't thought about this. But then he lifted up his face and said, "If you're going to have a wedding, make sure you invite Jesus!" The little boy was on to something. Weddings are time of Joy.

Jesus performed many miracles during His public **ministry**. The miracle **of turning** water into wine in this text was the **first of all Jesus'** miracles. By this first miracle, Jesus shows that he is the Lord of joy and comes to give us joy.

Jesus comes to give us joy

Some people think that Jesus comes **to rob** them of joy. They think that Jesus puts **lots** of rules of "dos and don'ts" and prevents them from worldly pleasures. They think that they must give up what they are enjoying when they believe Jesus. But, this is **a misunderstanding** of who Jesus is and what Jesus brings to our lives. As we see in this text, Jesus does not force us to follow rules. Jesus does not rob us of joy in our ordinary lives. On the contrary, Jesus participates in our joyful lives. Jesus sets us free from the troubles which rob us of joy and fills our lives with joy.

Jesus proves this truth in this text. Jesus performed **his** first miracle at a **wedding**. What would be the main **emotion** you **would** share at a **wedding**? Joy! That is right. People come to a **wedding** to celebrate **the** joy of **the** wedding with the bride and the groom. So, what could it mean that Jesus **went to a wedding** and performed **his** first miracle to help the wedding party?

It means that Jesus wants to share joy with us in our ordinary lives. It means that Jesus **solves** the problems **that** rob us of our joy and **so brings** joy **into** our lives.

Of course, the cross is the key of Jesus' life and one of the key themes of the cross is suffering. But by the cross Jesus does not bring sadness and **depression** to our lives. Jesus never **intends** his cross to be a cross of

sadness without joy. When Jesus says that we have to take up our cross to follow him, he does not mean that we have to be always serious and forfeit pleasures in our ordinary lives.

In fact, in the New Testament, we often see Jesus at parties and that he fully engages **in**. He enjoyed himself so much that his detractors called him a “glutton and drunkard” (Matthew 11:19). No one ever accused Jesus of promoting a legalistic, rigid, emotion-stifling religion — just the opposite. Wherever Jesus went there was vibrant life and joy. Jesus says in John 15:11, *“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

Although there are sufferings in following the cross of Christ, there is also joy, because the cross of Jesus always brings the power of new life, power that positively transforms life.

When Jesus changed the water into wine, he did not just change the color and fool the people’s taste buds. He transformed tasteless water into tasty wine. That is what the banquet master 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”* (John 2:10).

How can you not be joyful when Jesus **solves** your problems **when** nobody **else can**? How can you not rejoice when Jesus positively transforms your life?

Paul, who experienced the joy of the Lord even in sufferings, encourages us to rejoice always: *“Be joyful always...for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17). *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”* (Philippians 4:4).

Jesus brings joy according to God's time

In those days, a Jewish **wedding** continued for several days- **up to** a week long. And during all the days of a **wedding**, wine was the most important **item** in the party menu. But here, **at this wedding**, a serious problem arose. In the middle of the **celebration**, the wine ran out...!

And that's what happens in some situations in our lives. When you are doing something important, you need certain **essentials**. But **at** some moment, that **essential runs** out. When you really need to be healthy and strong to work hard and long hours, you may get weak or sick. When you really need some extra money to buy something for your child, your car **brakes** down. When you are emotionally stressed out and really **need support** from your close friend, the friend moves far away. When you need wine, your wine begins to run out...! And there is no way to stop it.

So, when the essential runs out how can you replace it? Let's see here how the **old** wine was **replenished** with **new** wine.

When no one could solve the problem of the shortage of wine, Mary brought the problem to Jesus: *"They have no more wine."* What Mary meant by the word, is *"Jesus, this wedding banquet has a big problem now. Nobody can solve this problem. I believe you can solve this problem. Can you please do something to solve it?"* Bringing a problem to Jesus is the best way to solve the problem. But we must know that bringing a problem to Jesus is just the first step **in solving** the problem.

When Mary brought the problem to Jesus expecting him to do something to solve the problem, Jesus said: *"Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come."* Apparently, Jesus seemed to deny Mary's request.

But Jesus was not denying **Mary's request**. Jesus was emphasizing the **timing in** solving the problem. What Jesus meant by "My time" was

“God’s time.” He did everything according to God’s time. So, he meant that he would solve the problem according to God’s time, and Mary should wait for God’s time.

To receive joy from the Lord who solves our problem, we must wait for God’s **timing**. The time when our problem must be solved is decided by God. Sometimes we wonder why our problems are unsolved even though we are praying so hard to God **to solve** our problems. But we have to **realize** that **it is** not by the **timing** we expect or desire but **by God’s** will. And his will is always good for us. That is what Jesus is teaching here. So, we have to wait on God’s **timing** for everything we need as Psalm 37:7 says, “*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; ...*”

Jesus brings joy by solving our problems

Jesus solved the problem of **the** shortage of wine **at** the **wedding banquet** and brought joy to all people there. How did he solve the problem? He solved the problem by performing a miracle. How did he perform the miracle? He used ordinary things and ordinary people at the **wedding**.

He used ordinary water, ordinary water jars and ordinary servants. Jesus can use ordinary things and ordinary men to perform a miracle.

Jesus’ transformed mere water into the best wine through the obedience of **the** servants. The servants did whatever Jesus told them to do. They filled the stone jars with water as Jesus told them. Each of these jars held between 20 and 30 gallons of water, and there were 6 jars. That’s about 120-180 gallons of water. It must have taken a lot of time and effort to finish the job- trip after trip to the well to draw water and pour it into the jars. And we don’t know how far it was from the **wedding banquet** to the well. They would have been tempted to do a half-hearted and half-completed job.

But these men fully obeyed Jesus' word and got the job done. When Jesus told them to fill the jars, they took Jesus' words quite literally, and they filled them all the way to the brim, just shy of overflowing. Also, after they filled the jars with water, Jesus told them to take the water in the jars to the people **at the banquet**. What for? They needed wine. But Jesus was telling them to bring them water. It did not make any sense. But anyway, they obeyed again. And they noticed that the mere water was transformed into tasty wine.

The world wants us to be someone special to make things happen. People seek to be wealthy and famous to be recognized. Women want to be physically beautiful and attractive to gain what they **want**.

But Jesus does not want you to be someone special to do amazing things. Jesus does not need the wealthy and famous to do marvelous things. Jesus does not necessarily need physically beautiful women to solve problems.

He wants to use ordinary people to do great things. Paul confirms this truth by the word in *1 Corinthians 1:27-29*, "*But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*"

Do you want to be used by the Lord for great things- like turning mere water into tasty wine? Do you want Jesus to use you **to transform a life**?

All you have to do, is do whatever he tells you.

He may tell you to do something you **don't** understand. But the good news is he will never tell you to do something **impossible**.

He may tell you to go to the **West** when you want to go to the **East**. It is **not impossible** for you to go **West**. It is just a matter of surrendering your **thoughts** and **desires** to his will and obeying. If you obey and go to the West, you will see his miracle later. You will rejoice in the miracle.

He may tell you to **generously increase your giving for** his ministry when you need more money for yourself. It is not impossible for you to **generously give more**. You just don't understand why. If you obey and **generously give more**, you will receive his miraculous financial blessing later. You will rejoice in the blessing.

He may tell you to forgive your enemy when you want to destroy your enemy. When you feel **that is** impossible, he gives you his grace of forgiveness and makes it possible for you to forgive. At that point, if you surrender your anger and bitterness to him and obey his word, you **will be able to** forgive. And you will receive the power that can transform both you and your enemy. The transformation will bring you joy.

Whatever problem you are struggling with now, bring it to Jesus first. Give it to him and ask **for** his help. Wait patiently for his **timing**. And whatever he tells you to do, just obey his word and do as he tells you to do. He will solve the problem. If necessary, he will perform a miracle for you. He will bring joy to you.