

The Second Sunday after Epiphany
St. John 2:1-11
January 14th, 2018
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Good Wine

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

This narrative is often called “The Wedding in Cana.” However, the reading has very little to do with the actual wedding itself. The Gospel is really about the wine for the guests. The wine is gone. To run out of wine at a wedding, was a social faux-pas. There was supposed to always be enough wine for the guests to become, “well drunk.” In other words, there was to be enough wine for all the guests to have a good buzz going, and be able to maintain that buzz until the party was over. But, they have run out of wine before the party is over.

So, the Blessed Virgin Mary goes to her Son. She simply says to Him, “They have no wine.” It is quite a different interaction from last week’s Gospel when our Lord was twelve years old and Whose whereabouts were unknown to His parents for three days. Then the Blessed Virgin Mary was in a panic. Here she is calm. Even after He says, that her concern is of no concern to Him, because His time had not yet come, she simply tells the servants to do whatever He commands them to do.

It is necessary at this point to establish the timeline of the Evangelist St. John’s Gospel. Just as the Boy + Jesus was in the temple three days, before being found. We are told that this wedding in Cana happened “On the Third Day.” Well, on the third day of what? What happened three days ago? This is the third day after our Lord’s Holy Baptism. Just three days removed from St. John the Baptist proclaiming our Lord + Jesus the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. Just three days from the voice of the heavenly Father proclaiming that this Man + Jesus was His Beloved Son, in Whom He was well-pleased. Just three days from the Holy Ghost descending and resting upon Him. Over the course of the next two days, our Lord + Jesus called Sts. John and James, Simon Peter and Andrew, and Philip and Nathaniel to be His disciples. These are the disciples who accompany our Lord to the wedding in Cana. This is the timeline according to the Evangelist St. John.

Therefore, according to these events, it would appear that His time had come. He would certainly need to endure the temptation of the devil in the wilderness after fasting for forty days still, but He has already been baptized and started to call His disciples. So, without much further ado, the Lord commands the servants to fill the jars used for purification with water to the brim. Each jar contained about twenty or thirty gallons, and there were six of them.

They were next instructed to take some to the master of the feast. The water had been turned into wine. And not just any wine, but the best wine the master of the feast had tasted. It was truly a wonderful gift from the Lord and Creator of Heaven and Earth. At His Word the water had become wine.

This is certainly a great miracle in and of itself. But the more remarkable thing about this narrative is the allusions that are inherent in it. The Evangelist St. John in his Gospel is more concerned with making theological statements than with accurate historical timelines. And there are a couple of things to make note of from this Gospel. The first is that the same elements that are talked about at the end of our dear Lord's life and ministry, are the same elements used in today's Gospel. Both water and wine are mentioned. Water has found its use among us in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Wine finds its use among us in the Sacrament of the Altar. There the wine is united to the Blood of our dear Lord Christ for the forgiveness, life and salvation for all Christians who eat and drink His Body and Blood in with and under bread and wine in faith and in worthy fellowship.

Blood and water flowed from the precious Savior's side after His death on the cross, signifying that all Christians are saved through water and blood. Here at the wedding in Cana is signified that all Christians are saved through water and wine; through Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. All those who participate in these Sacraments and who believe that they receive the gifts freely offered receive such gifts from our dear Lord + Jesus Christ.

This wedding in Cana happened on the third day. On the third day after our Lord's death on the cross, He arose from the dead. His resurrection gives us confidence that we too will on the Last Day be raised with all believers in Christ and be given new, glorious, heavenly bodies, and we will get to live with our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, and all the saints for all eternity.

The Lord + Jesus gave the wedding couple a great gift that day. He gave them the good wine. Our dear Lord gives to all of us who commune in faith and worthily in pure fellowship with one another the good wine, too. In fact, we receive the best wine. For we receive not just the wine, but we receive our Lord's Blood; the Blood He shed on the tree of the holy cross to redeem us poor, miserable sinners from sin, death and the power of the devil. Whenever we eat His Body and drink in Blood in bread and wine, we remember His sacrifice, and receive the gifts that He won on the cross for us.

We are also united to Him and all those with whom we commune in fellowship into a bond of love. The same bond of love that exists between husband and wife. Just as husband and wife are joined together as one in holy matrimony, in the Blessed Sacrament all of us who commune together in pure fellowship are united with one another in the Church. We receive fervent love for our God and for each other.

Just as the Blessed Virgin Mary gave command to the servants of the wedding feast to do whatever the Lord + Jesus commanded them to do, so too do the servants of Holy Mother Church. The Ministers of the Word, are commanded to preach the Word of God in its truth and purity and administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. In so doing they distribute the gifts of the Lord + Jesus to all those who receive them in faith. The Ministers of the Word hand out freely forgiveness, life and salvation to all those who would receive them. These gifts are for you. Cling to them as you would any good promise given to you.

For, the Good Wine is before you. Our Lord + Jesus Christ is the good wine. He gives of Himself so that you may be well-drunk of the Holy Ghost, and filled with the Spirit of love and mutual admiration for the Heavenly Father and for our Lord + Jesus Christ. Come and receive the Good Wine. Hear His Word. Rejoice that He has washed you with the purifying water of Holy Baptism, so that your sins are drowned, and you now live as a new creation robed with the righteousness of Christ. Hear His Absolution, His forgiveness, spoken by His servant that buries once again your sins in your Holy

Baptism, and prepares you to receive His Body and Blood in bread and wine, to strengthen your faith, and fill you with His love. All this He does for you, so that you might have a wonderful gift, and be led into your eternal home in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.