

Jesus the Bridegroom

St John 2:1-11

The word 'Epiphany' means to make known. Wisemen-star. Baptism-God's Beloved Son. This morning the Church has appointed our gospel reading for today as another epiphany of Jesus.

In Jesus' day when there was wedding, the bridegroom put on the feast and was especially responsible for providing the wine. That is why when Mary tells Jesus about the shortage of wine, Jesus responds, "Woman, what does this have to do with me, my hour has not come." Why does Jesus respond to His mother in that way? The answer is this is not Jesus' wedding feast. He is not the bridegroom. At least not yet.

But...Jesus will be the bridegroom. This the reason he has come from heaven to earth. He has come for his bride, the church. To take her, the Church to be His own, and take her to His home in heaven. He has come to give himself up for the bride and lay down His life for the bride, the church. He will do this (and he did this on the cross) after leaving his Father in Heaven, He also leaves His mother, and hold fast to His bride. He would not forsake her; He would not come down from the cross.... But, right here in our gospel, at this wedding feast in Cana, It is not His time for that particular work to be done. But it is coming.

But still Jesus is willing help the poor bridegroom at this earthly wedding. This man was not the perfect bridegroom. Jesus is the only perfect bridegroom. He helped this poor bridegroom so that the joy of this earthly wedding might go on, and maybe save him from a lot of embarrassment. What Jesus do? He instructs the servants to fill the six jars with water to the brim. That is interesting. Wine in Jesus' day came in wine skins. But Jesus is using 20–30-gallon jars. And the water in these jars was for purification rites, like hand washing or feet washing. Jesus miraculously turns this water to wine providing more wine for this feast, not just any old wine, but the best wine, better than they had before, and these is up to 180-gallons of it!

This also gives us a picture of Jesus' love for this couple being married and His love for us. It gives us a picture of Jesus love for us not only now but also into eternity. On this earth there is no bridegroom or bride that is perfect. There comes a time when joy and happiness run low. That is, we run out of wine, when the honeymoon is over, when joys are less, and sins are more. The answer when this comes is not to separate and go our own way, but to receive Jesus Christ and give his forgiveness. This is what make the love and joy of the marriage stronger and deeper when Jesus Christ is at the center of the earthly marriage life.

Not just in marriage, the same can happen in life. Even in the Christian life. Where all believers live as the bride of Christ. There comes a time when the wine runs out, the joys are fleeting, and the troubles are many. It is so because we are not perfect brides and people. We are spotted with sins, we hurt other by actions and words, and we are hurt by the actions and deeds of others. We are not yet at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in heaven where the food will be the best and wine the finest and joy will be unending. But that is not yet.

Even when Jesus helped the poor groom on that day in Cana, He even more has come to help you. He does turn water into wine for us but turns the wine into His life-giving cup of blessing. It is a life given for you by giving His life on the cross for you, to wash away your sins, that we might be holy and spotless and without blemish. Whenever the meal of Holy Communion is served it is a foretaste of the feast to come, a feast which will have no end. Jesus has come to restore our joy with his forgiveness and raise us with life joined to him. There is nothing that this Bridegroom Jesus will do for His church, the bride. For you!

And as a result, not only was the wedding at Cana able to go on, with this sign Jesus manifested His glory and His disciples believed in Him. Was it a perfect faith they had? Certainly not. There are no perfect brides and grooms here on earth, no perfect people who live in this world. There is no perfect faith earth. The disciples would continue to have their doubts and struggles, just as we do. We do not see God face to face. Yet we catch glimpses of His glory like Moses on Mt Sinai, and His disciples did at Cana. We too see with eyes of faith, to see the glory made known in Jesus, in God's Word, in the incarnation, being born of Mary, in His coming to bear our sins, and to be our Savior, The glory of being crucified on the cross for you. The glory of His resurrection. In the glory of all His work for us and for our salvation. So that we might believe in Him. That He is our Bridegroom, that He is coming again for His Bride, the church, for you. And to take you to His Home forever.

For some He has already come. Thanks be to God! For the rest of us He comes yet to be present in our troubles, like at Cana, to give us the forgiveness of sins, To give us His love even when our love runs cold. He comes to be our light in the darkness. He comes to be our Hope when we things seem hopeless. He comes to be joy in sadness. He was with His children when they wandered in the wilderness to the promised land. He was the disciples at Cana, and He has been with you in the past, He is with you Today, and He will be with you tomorrow.

This is the gift of Christ unwrapped for you today. The gift given at Christmas, That he is the Son of God given to be your Bridegroom, to make you the perfect Bride. In His incarnation he has become our flesh and bone And has been united with you in your baptism. In this baptism you are one with Him. For you He lives, for you He dies, For you he rose, For you He is coming to take you to the greatest wedding feast of all.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.