

WHAT IS IT TO MEAN THAT JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY?

Should we not fear His wrath? Will we not cherish the Gospel in Word and Sacrament?

John 2:1-11

TEXT: *On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 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 aside 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." This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

What a wonderful story! Is this not a text most applicable to Christian weddings even for today? That Jesus would attend! I've used this application, and it is true, that our Lord who is with His children always, attends our weddings, and blessing them with His presence, offers us His Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith and commitment to Him as well as to one another.

But today is nobody's wedding day. Therefore, what can we possibly glean from this historical account of Jesus' first miracle? The answer from Scripture is upon that we would focus: ***This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.*** In other words: WHAT IS IT TO MEAN THAT JESUS REVEALS HIS GLORY? Should we not fear His wrath? Will we not cherish the Gospel in Word and Sacrament?

In my Seminary days, old professors who had been pastors in congregations 50 – 75 years ago had said that it was not uncommon that the wedding reception didn't really begin until the pastor had eaten and left. Then the dancing would start! It's not like that anymore in this day and age! But I wonder how the VISISBLE presence of Jesus at our wedding celebrations would affect the behaviors of all the celebrants? Would the toasts made by the Best Man and Maid of Honor be more sublime than sad efforts to be funny? And if the pastor is to begin the meal with a prayer, I know how nervous I would be to grab the microphone from DJ and try to manufacture a meaningful prayer that would impress Jesus! Then, when the DJ starts the dancing with the traditional removal of the bride's garter... Maybe they might just skip that part! And when the music begins, will the fact that Jesus is watching the dance limit the selection of music to just polkas? There can be nothing less suggestive than to dance the polka! Would the VISIBLE presence of our dear Lord Jesus put a damper on the traditional wedding reception of today?

What are we to do then about this Jesus who makes more wine after everyone had already consumed what had been provided? And then he makes 120-180 gallons of such a high quality wine that it evokes amazement from the master of the ceremony? Some are so disturbed by this, they bend over backwards in coming up with explanations for this miracle so that Jesus Himself

doesn't look like He is enabling the delinquency of a party gone wild.

Some try to explain this by suggesting that this bride and groom must have been very poor, so that they didn't have enough wine to begin with. Others suggest that Jesus and His disciples were invited to this wedding at the request of His mother, and that is why there wasn't enough wine to go around.

And some would rather not discuss this issue at all since we know that there are some who would eagerly use this Scripture to suggest that Jesus' actions mean that it's OK for us to drink too much, especially when we are having fun, like at a wedding.

The historical facts set before us by the Holy Spirit are indeed troubling, if all we are trying to do is to justify ourselves and our behaviors before the Lord. And what is more terrifying to us is when this account teaches us clearly that the One who makes the wine is the One who is going to return on Judgment Day to judge us on how well we have used it! It doesn't matter if Jesus sets before me one tiny glass of wine, or *six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons...* To abuse whatever our Lord sets before us is a sin. Just because the Lord is generous and pours out abundant blessings, this does not give me license to overindulge, for He says: *Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.* Lv 19

This goes for ALL of God's created gifts. Marriage, for example, is a blessing that God has given us. Scripture says: *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.* He 13 Jesus honored marriage with His presence at this wedding. But He told adulterers to repent and to sin no more. So many today who have sex outside of marriage and live together without being married have no fear of God for they despise Jesus who honored marriage.

From drinking wine, to finding a marriage partner, this command goes for all of the Lord's blessings. The Apostle Paul summed up true Christian behavior that recognizes Jesus as both God and Lord with these words: *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.* 1Co 10 -- that is, whatever we do in life, do it as if we were sitting at the table with Jesus, the Son of God!

There is no comfort for sinners to be in the presence of the glory of God. It terrifies us, and well it should! But before the Cross of Christ sinners find comfort and peace. Therefore we who see the glory of God in the cross of Jesus will cherish it. True believers will cherish the Gospel in Word and Sacrament.

Jesus blessed this wedding party with such an abundance of such good wine, it evoked the surprised response of the master of the wedding feast: *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 aside 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."* This Scripture does suggest that Jesus made this abundance of wine even while there were some who had too much to drink. This also troubles us because if we were at a party, and someone we cared about had been drinking too much, we would not offer them any more wine. Yet Jesus makes more than enough!

How do we explain this about Jesus? First Jesus reveals His glory as the gracious Creator who opens His hand and satisfies abundantly. This does not mean that man has been given permission to sinfully use and abuse God's earthly blessings, even though we do. On the other hand, this fact alone should move us to worship Him more than just on Sundays! Each and every

day should be a day of thanksgiving to God! Yet there few who even make Sunday the only time that they worship. And there are even more who find every Sunday worship a drudgery that they can do without!

But the second thing that this first miracle at the Wedding of Cana reveals is that the holy sinless Son of God is Jesus who was willing to live among those for whom He would die. To live among the drunks and the winos, the adulterers and perverts, the hypocrites and self-righteous, the arrogant, selfish and greedy. This love is the greatest of God's glory that His Son Jesus hides in the cross. He does this so that all who are rightly terrified by sin are then comforted by grace that would move Him to do this work of redemption. David writes: *If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.* Ps 130 ... *therefore you are feared.* ...! This "fear" of God is not the kind of fear that keeps us from inviting Jesus to our party, but the kind of "fear" that springs from the intense redeemed sinners have for Jesus. This fear, love and respect causes us to cherish the Gospel and the ministry of it's proclamation. Believers do not go to church because we have to, but because we want to!

This same Jesus who sat at the wedding party of poor sinners 2000 years ago, is come to us today with the invitation to His Wedding feast. He comes to us today in, with and under the bread and wine that He Himself consecrates with His own Word and Promise, miraculously giving us His true body and blood! This is the wedding feast of the Kingdom of God! Who will despise it? Only those who believe that they "have to" do this. But all have seen the glory of God in the glory of the cross of Jesus WANT to receive the blessed Gospel in Word and Sacrament. What a comfort it is to know that we weak sinners still have the comfort and assurance of His presence among us in this way!

Jesus will come again, in glory, to take all who have put their faith in Him to the Wedding Feast of the Son of God and His Church. Be comforted in this, that the One who changed water into wine 2000 years ago has worked an even greater miracle in your hearts. Your presence here today proves it! Amen.