



"No Ordinary Sunday: Water Becomes Wine"

Second Sunday of Epiphany
5:30 p.m. Saturday, January 16, 2016
The Reverend John H. Brock
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

In our Gospel lesson, there are really three different things going on here: First, we have the wedding banquet itself; second, we have what goes on between Mary and Jesus; third, the action concludes with Jesus turning the water into wine.

Last week in our readings, Jesus was baptized. This incident at Cana is, as far as we know, his first public expression that he is not simply some blue collar worker from the backwaters of the Roman Empire. We don't know for certain as to why he is there. He's referred to as being there with his disciples, many of whom he had just called in chapter 1. However, his mother is also there. So was this a family event? A cousin, or perhaps even a sibling? Was it small town celebration of a couple of nice kids? That would have been closer to the custom of the day - that the entire village would come out to the celebration. Regardless, Jesus is there, as are his disciples and his mother.

Isn't it interesting what happens when the wine gives out? Mom approaches son - who is NOT the groom (it's the groom's responsibility to make certain there's enough food & drink for the guests). Mary approaches Jesus and gives him a statement. She doesn't give him a request. She doesn't tell him to help out, or to do something. She simply says: *"They have no wine."*

It's kind of heartening, in some respects, to hear Jesus' response. We've all had parents, whether our parents are still alive or not. Hopefully, most of us have had the opportunity to deal with our parents once we ourselves became adults. Yet even as an adult, it is difficult to respond to our own parent in any other way than I did as a child, isn't it? It takes a lot of effort on my part to remember to talk to my mother, and treat her, the same way I would talk and treat a person her age, and NOT as a child would speak to their parent - you know, the exasperated, expectant tone that we used as teenagers, when we were absolutely certain we knew more than they did, and even now, as an adult, when we realize we **don't** know more than mom or dad, it's still so hard **not** to use that tone. We kind of hear it in this lesson, in the way that Jesus responds to his mom: *"Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come."*

And how does Mary respond? And why does she respond that way? Is her response that of a mother who has great expectations for her son? Is her response that of a believer, who has seen and experienced - from birth - all that has happened to and around this person - the star at his birth, the shepherds and the magi, the dove descending at his baptism? Regardless, Mary says to the servants: *"Do whatever he tells*

you." And the miracle happens: water becomes wine.

Now I have to say, that in all the miracles in John's gospel, this is one that leaves me a little baffled. In John's gospel, Jesus will: Save the life of a little boy; Heal a lame man, that he can walk; Walk on water; Forgive a woman accused of adultery, and chastise her accusers who would stone her; Give sight to a man born blind; and Raise Lazarus from the dead. Those are all some pretty *life altering* events. They deal directly with individuals, and their sins, and personal forgiveness.

How does wine for a party fit into all this? This story, about wine and relationships, is about change, and transformation. Which is, when we think about it, what all the other miracles are about as well.

I have to wonder: Did Mary think that Jesus would turn the wine into water? Had she seen him do things like that before? Was she wishing for him to do a splashy thing like this, kind of an introduction to the neighborhood as to who he was? She appears to know that something was going to happen. But did things turn out the way she anticipated?

The marriage steward was amazed. He didn't know what was going on, simply that the first supply of wine had run out. For round two, he is expecting mediocre wine. Instead, the steward tastes a *great* vintage, and he's blown away. He compliments the groom. But did the groom even know what was going on?

All this is what Jesus accomplishes on his first public venture: Astonishment; Joy; and Revelation. Jesus will go on to accomplish (miracle wise, as I noted from John's gospel a few moments ago), similar things on his next several ventures: healing; new life; sight; and forgiveness. Yet it all started out with him making wine.

Which makes me wonder: if he can accomplish that with water into wine, what, then, can Jesus achieve with us? What change in my own life needs to happen in order to make for such a miraculous transformation? A transformation that would bring about wonder and amazement, and joy? What change can we, together, through Christ, to bring about change in our lives, and in the lives of others?

So perhaps that another part of the miracle: to cause us to look at our own lives, to seek that transformation of water into wine, from ordinary into extraordinary, in our everyday living. Not us doing a literal change of drinking water into drinking wine, but of God ordinary as you and me, and changing us into something that is faith building, joy affirming. What would our faith journey be like, if we allowed God to do that? How would we then tell the story of Jesus, using the everyday, ordinary, things of our life, to tell of this amazing, extraordinary life, to the world?

How will we take water, and help make it into wine?

Amen.

Copyright © 2016, John H. Brock. All rights reserved.



www.trinitycamphill.org