

January 16, 2011

SOLI DEO GLORIA  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

Good Shepherd, Novi

**JOHN 2:1-11**  
**JESUS HAS REVEALED HIS GLORY.**

*In the name + of Jesus.*

In the beginning, God created the man and the woman. He brought them together as husband and wife and established the order of marriage. He blessed marriage, and he intended to bless man and woman through marriage. It is a holy estate that provides order. It enables a man and a woman to fulfill their sensual desires in a pure manner. And it fosters the best environment for the raising of children. What God had established in the Garden of Eden as a most blessed estate, and we pray that our world – and especially the family of God – would continue to honor it as such.

God came into the world in the flesh. And when he began his public ministry, one of the first places he went was to a wedding. Though the perfection of Eden was destroyed by sin, God still regarded marriage as a holy estate and a blessed institution. He came to the wedding at Cana, and he bestowed blessings upon the man and the woman, just as he had blessed the first man and woman so long ago.

But the bride and groom who were married at Cana had not even completed their wedding feast before they endured strife and hardship. Now, perhaps it seems like no big deal to you that they would have run out of wine at the wedding feast. Mistakes happen. You understand that there are occasionally oversights in planning. But, chances are you are not as charitable when you are the one who suffers because of someone else's oversight. In the case of this Galilean wedding, running out of wine was more than an "oops." It was a disaster. It was an insult to the guests, and it shamed the bride and groom.

Mary, Jesus' mother, was there at the wedding, too. **When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." (John 2:3)** Mary recognized the problem, and she wanted to stem disaster before it occurred. She alerted Jesus to the situation. She was doing more than passing along information. She knew that Jesus could help. She implied that Jesus *should* help. But Jesus politely and sternly rebuffed her request. **"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." (John 2:4)**

We might find Jesus' response to his mother and his inaction a little confusing. After all, if he loves this bride and groom and wants to spare them shame, why wouldn't he step in? That is our reaction when we read the events from 2,000 years ago. When similar events take place in our lives now, we go past confusion and frustration. We go straight to blaming and belligerence. *If God is love, then why am I getting dumped on so much? If God cares about me, then why do I still have to endure these problems? If God will meet all my needs, then why must I suffer loss, or shame, or deficiencies?* Do not blame God for evil. The evils that exist in this world are the result of sin, and it is not God who has brought sin into the world; it is man. And while you did not commit the first sin, you are not without sin. You deserve your curse. You have earned both temporal and eternal punishment.

But God does use evil for his own good purposes. King Solomon wrote: **"When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made one as**

**well as the other.” (Ecclesiastes 7:14)** God let the bride and groom in Cana run out of wine. Jesus let them suffer the shame that followed it on purpose. It wasn't that Jesus failed to jump into action because he did not know the problem. God is never ignorant. Jesus waited to act until the time for him was right. The bride and groom felt their shame. They recognized their total impotence to fix it. The feast was over. The joy went sour. There was no more celebration.

Jesus uses evil for the same purpose for you, too. As much as you like to think that you are in control, Jesus allows things to go beyond your control. He wants you to recognize that you are powerless, corrupt, and empty. You can't fix your illness. You can't repair what you broke. You can't restore what you lost. You can't hide your sins. You can't cover your shame. You can't avoid your death. You can't escape God's judgment. You are helpless. Joy goes sour. There is nothing to celebrate.

Jesus wants you to know this, so he often makes you feel it. It is a painful lesson. You learn it by disappointment, frustration, shame, and grief. You learn it by being lied to, abandoned, betrayed, and ripped off. You learn that there is nothing in this world that you can trust. Nothing that lasts. Nothing that saves. Therefore, repent of trusting anything in this world or you will perish with it.

This, then, is the hour when Jesus reveals hope. This is when Jesus provides relief. It was only after the wine was gone that Jesus acted. He had the servants fill the jars with water – over 100 gallons' worth. Now, Jesus could have said, “Serve that. Water is good enough.” But Jesus never settles for good enough. Jesus is much more gracious than that. He turned the water into wine – over 100 gallons' worth! The feast, the joy, and the celebration only happen when Jesus acts. Jesus removed the shame of the bride and groom. He brought abundant blessing to them and honored their marriage feast.

But how much more Jesus has done for you! You cannot escape evils and you cannot fix them. You must be delivered from them. And if you would be delivered from all evils, you must be free from all sin. The feast, the joy, and the celebration can only happen when Jesus acts. And he does.

What you are lacking, Jesus produces for you. You are lacking the holiness God demands. So Jesus provides it for you. He does not simply give directives for holy living; Jesus lived and obeyed in your place. He fulfilled the Law which you have failed. And Jesus provides the glory you are lacking. He has removed your shame by taking your sin and your punishment for you. Jesus was lied about, abandoned, and betrayed. The soldiers ripped off Jesus' clothing. He died in shame – laying down his life under God's curse to pay for all of your sins. In turn, Jesus has covered you in his blood to cleanse you of all sin and to cover your shame. Jesus presents you to his Father not just better, but blameless! Jesus does not settle for blessings that are good enough; he presents them in abundance.

Jesus demonstrated this compassion and generosity already at his very first miracle. He took away shame and replaced it with blessing. His gift was not just enough to get by. It was superior in quality, and abundant in quantity. Jesus, thus, revealed his glory – He is the true God who saves, who removes shame, who provides the best gifts, and who brings joy and celebration to people.

Jesus still reveals his glory today, and it is still done at the feast. Here, he provides wine for his people freely and gladly. He joins his word to it so that we receive the blood which was shed for our sins. Here, the Savior's glory is revealed as he takes away our

sins, as he covers our shame, as he gives us the righteousness we lack, as he delivers the life we need. Here is the feast. Here is your joy. Here is reason to celebrate. For, Jesus has revealed his glory. He is the God who forgives sins. He delivers from evil. He removes shame. He bestows blessing. And he grants life.

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**