**SUNDAY, 1/16/22**

**SERMON**

**JOHN 2:1-11**

Gregory was a deputy sheriff assigned to courthouse security.

As part of his work he explained court procedures to visitors.

One day he was showing a group of ninth-graders around the court house

 explaining procedures.

Court was in recess and only the clerk,

 and a young man in custody wearing handcuffs were in the courtroom.

"This is where the judge sits," Gregory explained pointing to the bench.

 "The lawyers sit at these tables.

 That gentleman is the court clerk he always sits where he is now.

 The court recorder, or stenographer, sits over here.

 Near the judge is the witness stand and over there is where the jury sits.

 As you can see, there are a lot of people

 involved in making this system work," he concluded.

Suddenly the prisoner raised his cuffed hands and said,

“Yeah, but I'm the one who makes it all happen.”

 I'm the one running the show."

It is always good to know who is running the show.

It is important to know who makes it all happen.

Does it seem strange that Jesus would pick a wedding

 as the place to launch His Ministry?

Perhaps He should have started with healing a blind man.

Or cleansing a leper.

Or maybe raise someone from the dead.

Wouldn't that attract more attention?

Why did He choose to change plain water into fine wine at a wedding?

Yet that is what Jesus did.

He and his disciples had been invited to a wedding.

In those days, wedding celebrations lasted for many days.

Jesus was relaxing and enjoying the celebration

 of a man and a woman committing themselves to each other in marriage.

But then the wine ran out.

The joyful celebration would become a great embarrassment to the entire family.

Mary told Jesus they had no more wine.

She told the servants: "Do whatever he tells you."

She had no doubts.

She knew Jesus could fix the problem.

She knew He could intervene in our lives at any moment.

He cared about the family and the pending embarrassment.

He could provide us with exactly what we need.

Jesus told the servants to fill the water jars with water.

And the servants did as they were told.

When the chief steward tasted the water which had become wine,

 he was amazed.

He did not know where this fine wine had come from.

There is no doubt that this was the best wine that he had ever tasted.

The wedding party would not be shamed or embarrassed.

The joy of the wedding celebration would be complete.

Jesus intervenes in our ordinary lives, ordinary situations,

 and ordinary conversations, and they become extraordinary.

Amazing things happen when we do what Jesus asks us to do.

When we follow His directions life is filled joy and peace.

This story of turning water into wine,

 was told by John for the purpose of revealing truths about God.

What is often over-looked in this story is the last line in our reading:

 “And His disciples believed in him.”

And that has made all the difference throughout the years.

When we believe, it makes all the difference:

 in our lives and in the lives of others.

Jesus can change us;

 He can change despair into hope,

 bitterness into peace,

 hatred into love, sorrow into joy,

 sin into grace, and death into life.

Mary instructed the servants at the wedding to do whatever Jesus said.

On the surface this may seem like very simple instructions.

But Mary's words are actually the key to living a successful Christian life.

In every situation, just do whatever Jesus says, and it will make all the difference..

The story of the wedding feast is not a one-time story.

Throughout the Bible we read the numerous stories of God intervening in our lives.

In Deuteronomy: So He humbled you, and fed you with manna,

 which you did not know, nor did your fathers know,

 that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone;

 but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

In the book of Nehemiah: You made known to them Your holy Sabbath,

 and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws,

 by the hand of Moses your servant.

 You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger,

 and brought them water out of the rock for their thirst,

and told them to go in to possess the land which you had sworn to give them.

Matthew: When it was evening, His disciples came to Him,

 saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late.

 Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages

 and buy themselves food."

 But Jesus said to them,

“They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

 He said, "Bring them here to Me."

 Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass.

 And He took the five loaves & the two fish, & looking up to heaven,

 He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples;

 And he disciples gave to the multitudes.

 So they all ate and were filled,

 and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

 Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men,

 besides women & children."

From the beginning God has cared about us, watched over us, and fed us.

The stories of miracles teach us about God's great love for us.

 They are like signposts showing us God's message.

Miracles, in and of themselves, are not greatly significant.

God's desire is not to impress, astonish, amaze, or entertain us.

These miracles, or signs, are meant to teach us about how much God loves us,

 and how He wants us to love one another.

AMEN