**1/19/25**

**The Banquet**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**John 2:1-11 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

Good morning and welcome to each and every one of you out there in the Pews and on our Conference Call. Thank you for joining us yet again in this community of faith so that we can fulfill the call to gather and be able to focus and explore the very words that we have right in front of us in scripture.

You know, I think that it is really cool that we get to explore a wedding banquet in our Gospel Reading on the very same day that we will be having a banquet of our very own here in our Fellowship Hall. As we join together with True Deliverance Praise & Worship Center for a Day of Service in honor of Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. it will be noticeable that our banquet will be slightly different than that of a wedding. However, I assure you it will have a lot of the same meaning and purpose. For we will celebrate life, we will break bread with one another, and we will come to spend time with our Lord and Savior through the very creation of humanity, all while taking action to serve and love one another. So, as you hear these words and explore this Gospel Reading a little deeper with me here, I also invite you to explore the life story and words of others while spending time with them this afternoon as well. Let us rejoice in the banquet for sure!

Now, one thing that I will assure you of is that there was no magic trick in our reading here. That, of course, is despite all of the memes and jokes that happen to be going around on the internet. Believe it or not, there are actually people who joke about Jesus being with them at parties or restaurants so that they can be sly and order water. They think this is a way of tricking the waiter, or even saving money and benefiting from a friend. As goofy and funny as these videos might be to some, I actually kind of find them rather disturbing and offensive. I mean, they are so far from the heart and truth of the matter, and that is precisely what we are going to explore here together. We are going to take some time to combat these things floating around on social media, and we are also going to take some time to really grasp some points from this very wedding banquet.

First off, you may be sitting there and asking yourself why Jesus, his mother, and his disciples were even at a wedding in the first place. Well, duh! Just like you and I, they were normal people, and for that fact they were invited to this banquet. They happened to be living life, and they were spending time with their family and friends. They of course were celebrating, eating, drinking, and rejoicing in the new lives joined together in marriage. That is of course until dun, dun, dunnnnnn! There was no more wine. Mind you, it was not like the servants at the party were going around fretting and announcing it. I just believe Jesus’ mother and the group might have been sitting so close to the kitchen that they noticed the disturbance and concern going on. Then again, just maybe Mary’s motherly instinct kicked in and she knew. So, in verse 3 we hear the mother of Jesus speak up and tell her son about the problem. She felt that Jesus could step up and handle things somehow, and of course she did not want the party and celebration to end early despite the short sightedness and lack of planning by the families or the party planner. More importantly, Jesus’ mother did not want the new couple and families to be disgraced. So, she called on her son to do his thing. She knew full well that he could handle this problem and keep the party going. However, if you think about it then you realize that there was actually something a little off here with our story. For despite her and Jesus’ disciples having an in on who he actually was, he had not actually done anything as of yet to mark that. Up until this very point no miracles or signs had been conducted by Jesus. So, you may be asking yourselves how Jesus’s mother all of a sudden knew that this would be the point where he would be stepping out. I encourage you to listen on here.

As we explore things further this is precisely where we get a little bit of humor injected into our Gospel Reading. Now, maybe if you are a parent then you find nothing humorous about having to deal with a snippy young person when they tell you that they are not doing something, and they even top it off by telling you that it is none of their business. However, that is precisely what Jesus does here as he goes as far to say that his hour has not come yet. Now, that of course is a lot more loaded of a response than his mother might have come to expect, or any one of us for that matter as well. This is also where we are reminded that he is not solely focused on that moment in time, or that particular issue. We are reminded that he is focused much further down the road as he is speaking of the cross, his resurrection, and his ascension. I mean what a deeply formed argument and rebuttal Jesus has delivered here rather than just simply telling his mother that he is not doing it! What I find even more interesting is the fact that his mother just kind of shrugs it off, as she of course has already been putting up with his crap for thirty years or so by now. So, we hear that she steps out on faith, and she steps out on the very notion that she knows the character and the love of her son. In verse 5 we actually hear her tell the servants to do what he tells you to do. Momma knows best right here, and this is precisely where we get the very first sign of Jesus’ ministry here on earth recorded in the book of John.

Now, Jesus quits being so stubborn and he goes to work. He tells the servants to fill up the huge jugs that are right there and used for the Jewish rites of purification. As a matter of fact, He even tells them to fill them with water to their very brim. Following that we get no wand waving, no words from a magic book, we just get action. Jesus works behind the scenes of the banquet with the people in the kitchen, and he does his thing and He creates wine. As a matter of fact, He even creates wine that typically takes a lot of time and effort to make, and he even did it in a (snap fingers) heartbeat. Then, to top it all off, he does not just create some ordinary wine either for Jesus manages to create the most awesome tasting wine, and for that fact he also creates quite an abundance of it too. I mean he does it so quickly and discretely that the banquet manager seems to have had no idea that they had even under planned or ran out. To top it all off the person running the banquet pretty much calls the bridegroom nuts for not serving this wine first. So, I am not really too sure what kind of planner he is anyways for this is a huge error and oversight. Let alone I would venture that he got paid well in advance, because he sure as heck pretty much killed any chance of gaining and extra tip because he might as well have just called the bridegroom stupid at his very own wedding banquet.

This indeed was an interesting story we got! What a series of events that elapse in just a few short verses! However, this very story that is right in front of us actually has so many more deep and somewhat hidden meanings! This for sure is a story of faith! It is a story where we get introduced to a completely different mindset from the other three Gospels as well. So, hang on with me here just a little bit longer as we explore a few of them.

First off, depending on what translation of the Bible you prefer, you may happen to stumble upon or notice just the little subtleties or differences in wording. Now, you may very well need a dictionary, a concordance, or even another version or two of the Bible to figure things out. So, where I am actually going with this happens to pertain to the tail end of our reading. It even took me a little extra effort to notice it as it came up in discussion during my time with the other Pastors during our Pericope group. As a matter of fact, it actually happens to be the only Gospel to use the term “signs” instead of “miracles.” Now, you may have or may have not caught that, and whether or not you did it is important to recognize this as the author of John changed the wording slightly as he was focused on the development of faith for all who read and reviewed his work. He had no desire to trick anyone, or even make anything more confusing. The author of John was really ensuring that this story was one that inspired faith back then, and to this very day as well. The author wanted to make sure that Jesus’ glory and majesty were captured in this very story.

Second off, I am rather sure that many of you out there, as well as myself, have felt as if we have run out, as if we are on empty, or as if we just do not have enough to go on. You and I have been the very wine jugs a time or two in our very lives. However, God does not allow for that to continue on, and this is precisely why I spoke of abundance before. It is where Jesus had these families, these people celebrating their wedding, and furthermore, he has each and every one of us in the palm of his hand. Now mind you, “abundant life does not mean a life of ease, comfort, and luxury or an absence of sorrow and suffering. But it does mean that in Jesus we have an abundant, extravagant source of grace to sustain us, grace that is more than sufficient to provide where we fall short and to give us joy even amid sorrow and struggle. Abundant life means that in Christ we are joined to the source of true life, life that is rich and full and eternal, life that neither sorrow, nor suffering, nor death itself can destroy.” (6) Jesus does not allow for things to take a bad turn at the banquet, and he does not allow that for us in this life either. Their jugs were empty, our jugs have been empty, but it was and is only temporary. For when we give things over to God, for when we trust, and when we have faith then all will be handled. We will be given support and strength. Just like for the disciples in our story, his glory will be revealed, we will believe, our jugs will be overflowing, and grace upon grace will be delivered to all of us indeed!

The last point I would like to focus on here today is the total reversal. We hear the banquet manager talk about the type of wine, and the best being saved for last. This indeed is the total role reversal we all get to experience when we allow God in every single place and aspect of our life. We no longer are handling things on our own. We no longer are struggling or fighting through things. We no longer are solely looking at the law and how it binds us, and makes things almost unattainable. When we let Jesus take the wheel he does and is way more than we can ever imagine. That is total reversal of thought and mindset, and it is the role reversal that he seeks from the very moment that we are baptized and he claims us as his very own. He wants and desires us to put our lives in his very hands. He wants us to taste and see how good life really is with him in it. We are and forever will be reminded that “In Christ, the very nature of glory is being redefined. It is glory with a silent purpose and aim, to create and maintain faith in Christ Jesus who responds to human need in ways that seem hidden and mysterious, but whose deeds are open to the eyes of faith.” (7) So, this is precisely where I remind you to continually open your minds and your hearts up no matter what, and to have that very faith and conviction to share that with others as well. The banquet of life was and will always be a glorious function, and a grand celebration, as long as we always remember who and whose we are!

**Amen and Amen.**

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 January 19th, 2025

 Second Sunday after Epiphany

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

 © 2018

 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Second Sunday after Epiphany

 The grace that Jesus shows in this scene is an act of overflowing abundance

 January 19, 2025

 Commentary on John 2:1-11

 Brian Peterson

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Second Sunday after Epiphany (Year C)

 Wine often marks major life moments.

 January 20, 2019

 Commentary on John 2:1-11

 Lindsey S. Jodrey

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Second Sunday after Epiphany

 A sign that in him, life, joy, and salvation have arrived

 January 16, 2022

 Commentary on John 2:1-11

 Elisabeth Johnson

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Second Sunday after Epiphany (Year C)

 John begins his Gospel with the famous prologue, the appearance of the Baptist,

 and the calling of Jesus’ first disciples.

 January 17, 2010

 Commentary on John 2:1-11

 Roy Harrisville III

**John 2:1-11 (NRSVUE)**

 Turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana is described as the first of Jesus’

 signs. Through many such epiphanies, Jesus reveals that he bears God’s

 creative power and joyful presence into the world.

 1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of

 Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

 3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”

 4 And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to me and to you? My

 hour has not yet come.” 5 His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells

 you.” 6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of

 purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the

 jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, “Now draw

 some out, and take it to the person in charge of the banquet.” So they took it.

 9 When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not

 know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew),

 that person called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, “Everyone serves the good

 wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you

 have kept the good wine until now.” 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in

 Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.