

John 2:1-11
Jan 16, 2022

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Alright. So, we are currently in the season titled “the Sundays after Epiphany.” It’s also known as Common time, although it’s not as common as the time after Easter. But, that’s what we call the green season. Common time. No celebrations.

Now, Epiphany, the day we celebrate the arrival of the Magi and the first revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles, is only one day. Epiphany is only January 6, but the season after that day has a definite flavor that reflects the day of Epiphany and it goes all the way up to The Transfiguration of our Lord, which is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday starts Lent and it falls on March 2 this year.

So, for 8 weeks, we have a focus on light, revelation, and epiphanies.

Glory actually has the connotation of light. Glory is very shiny. I think it should actually be “glow-ry.”

Now - revelation is what God does using glory to reveal God’s self and epiphanies are when we humans pick up on what God is laying down.

So today, we have The Wedding in Cana. It is the first of the glow-ry revelation epiphanies in John. The transformation of water to wine is Jesus’ first sign in the gospel of John. This is his first revelation to others of his true identity and hopefully we are having some epiphanies. And there are at least three epiphanies that we should be picking up on.

1 – Jesus changes things.

The party was about to break up because there was no more wine, which would have shamed the families, but Jesus changes the situation and brings honor to the wedding.

2 – Jesus is God’s creating Word

If we remember back the John 1, John tells us that Jesus is God's creating Word who has always been with God from the very beginning and it was through him that all things were made.

If we remember back to Genesis 1, God's voice, God's Word, swept over the waters and everything was created. So, of course the creating Word, Jesus, can, once again, make something out of plain water. This time it just happens to be wine. Wine that takes human beings months to make. There is no instant wine. People have been trying to create it for years. It just can't happen.

So, Jesus changes things and Jesus is God's creating Word! And those two really tie in with one another, don't they? Change and creation. They initially seem different, but they are also very similar, aren't they? Anyway. Jesus changes things and Jesus is God's creating Word, which is interesting to think about, right?

God created you, literally in the water of your mother's womb, and through Baptism, also watery, he changes us into a new creation – the Church - a congregation of people who together are the body of Christ for the sake of the world.

And that ties into the third revelation. The new creation, the body of Christ, the Church – is the bride and Jesus is our Bridegroom.

There is a long tradition in the Old Testament of God being the Bridegroom and Israel the bride. Here, in John 2, Jesus is revealed to be the Bridegroom. In John 3, John the Baptist will say it very clearly that Jesus is the Bridegroom, but here it is only subtly hinted at.

The thing with John, the gospel, is that it's like an onion – lots of layers. There is the surface layer of the literal wedding feast and there is also the deeper layer that is about God. In John 2, Jesus is being revealed as the Bridegroom. And that causes some humorous things for us.

The steward, who is serving the wine, has no idea where the wine came from. But, the servants do. The servants know what's going on.

On the surface level, those servants are the people working the wedding nearly 2000 years ago, but on the deeper level – we are they - you and I are the servants.

We are the ones who know first-hand that Jesus changes things. We see it with our own eyes as he also changes us. He turns us from being run of the mill water to wine! He does that through baptism.

And so, there is another interesting thing going on here. The jugs of water that were refilled by the servants were used to hold water for purification. If you remember last week with the Baptism of our Lord, baptisms in Jesus' day were quite common. Big jars of water were always around for people to wash themselves before serving God.

In Cana, Jesus takes that water, the water from the jugs of purification, and turns it into wine. Wine.

And interestingly, the jugs were empty. That means that everyone had already washed.

And so, we, as good Lutherans and Episcopalians who regularly have Holy Communion, should already be thinking of Holy Communion and the Last Supper where Jesus shares wine with the disciples before he is crucified. And in John it's also where Jesus washes the disciples' feet.

Layers. John is full of them!

At the Last Supper, Jesus shares wine with the disciples and then takes that wine with him through his death into his resurrection. The wine was in him for all three days from rejection, crucifixion, to resurrection.

In Cana, Jesus takes the jugs for purification and turns the water in them into wine. So we go from constant baptism for purification to one Holy Baptism which follow by lots of wine and feasting.

During the Eucharist, as the cup of wine is lifted up, I repeat Jesus' words – the creating Word's words – “This is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.”

Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus makes us pure – cleanses us of all sins – and in the process becomes our bridegroom. Creation, change, and a covenant relationship.

Jesus creates, makes changes, and is the bridegroom of the Church.

So in John, when the steward calls for the bridegroom, who is he really calling forward? The literal bridegroom or Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, our Bridegroom?

For John, the answer is yes, and when we see that deeper level, we have epiphanies. We see what God's glory is showing us.

And when we dive a little deeper into the wine, we come to see that Jesus is himself what the steward calls the good wine that has been saved for now. Now is Jesus' time, and that good wine lives not only in Jesus, but also in us through the sacraments.

Good wine is made of good fruit, and good fruit produces more good fruit. God is the vine and we are the branches – grape branches that make good wine.

Pretty cool, right?

Today as we ponder the Wedding at Cana, we remember that Jesus changes things. Jesus changes everything, because he is God's creating word. From water to wine. He changes it all.

And as God's servants, we know first-hand the change Jesus' causes in our lives and we know the newness he creates in us. He does that so that we can continue to do God's good work in the world, to be good wine.

Jesus is our Bridegroom.

We are in a covenant relationship with God – an eternal relationship with God that can never be broken, even if we go astray. Because our sins are forgiven, and God has promised to never stray from us, we have nothing to fear. God is faithful – all the time.

As the Psalmist says – Just as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so God rejoices over you.

And that really does change everything.

In Christ, we are changed into a new creation.

Thanks be to God! Amen.