

## The Second Sunday after Epiphany, A ✕ D 2009

**John 2:1-11** On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. <sup>3</sup> When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." <sup>6</sup> Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." <sup>11</sup> This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

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

1 This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him. Why at a wedding? Why is a wedding the context for the first miracle of Jesus, the demonstration of His divinity, the proof of His being God?

2 Marriage is good. Before a wedding was the showcase for the first miracle of Jesus, the gift of marriage was the product of the first miracle. When God created everything, on the sixth day, He created man. Each of the previous five days concluded with the Lord's declaration that it was good. But before the final day of His creation could be declared "very good," God looked at Adam—alone—and announced, "It is not good for man to be alone." So from a rib from Adam, God created Eve; from a piece of man, God created woman. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. Two complementary parts are restored into one flesh through the union of marriage.

3 Marriage is a good creation of God and His good gift to humanity. Why? Why has God established a relationship in which a man may love his wife and a wife may love her husband? As the Apostle says, this mystery is profound, and I am saying it refers to Christ and the church. Marriage is a good gift, and it gives you a picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church. No wonder the Lord Jesus chose a wedding as the place to begin showing Himself to be the Bridegroom of the Church. This marriage—between Christ and His Church—sets the pattern for all other marriages. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for Her. You don't live for yourself or make decisions that are in your own best interest anymore. Christ lived, died, and lives for His Church, so must you live your life for your wife. Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord, as the Church submits to Christ. He is your loving lord, and you must trust that he looks after your best interests. If he loves you like Christ loves His Church, submission is natural and safe.

Divorce is contrary to God's gift of marriage. Christ never divorces His Church, even when she's adulterous. So any divorce is never free from sin. All other abominations—sex outside the binding commitment of marriage, homosexuality, masturbation, lust—are sinful because they abuse the Lord's gift of marriage. Repent. Marriage is good.

4 A wedding is the context for the first sign of Jesus' divinity, but wine is the content of the miracle. When the wine ran out, the Mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." She makes no request, just entrusts her problem to her Lord, her Son. She has no plan for Him to follow. And, even when seemingly rebuked for her petition, she instructs the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." Learn from the Mother of God to pray, and learn from her what faith is. Do whatever He tells you. So the Lord commanded the servants to fill the six stone water jars used for the rite of purification with water. Then He commanded them to take some of the liquid to the master of the feast. When the master tasted the water now become wine, he commended the bridegroom, albeit the wrong bridegroom, "Everyone serves the good wine first. And when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." One hundred twenty to one hundred eighty gallons of the finest wine ever. Six to nine hundred bottles worth of the choicest wine.

5 Wine is a good gift, too, but one that, like sex, gets misused. Wine gladdens the spirit and numbs pain. It effects joy and enhances celebration. So Solomon records the proverb of King Lemuel, "Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in distress, let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their distress no more." Wine can be misused, and there is no shortage of biblical admonitions against drunkenness, but is a good gift from God.

6 But not every time is one for drinking wine. Not all time is for celebration. There is a time for distress, a time for enduring pain instead of muting it, a time for perishing, a time for neglecting wine. So, as He who made wine from water hung dying on the cross, when God in human flesh felt the pangs of thirst and was offered wine mixed with myrrh, Jesus refused the soothing drink. But His death meant the deliverance of His Bride, the Church. So, even in the midst of intense anguish, when offered wine for a second time on a sponge, He drank it. And, having received wine, having drunk in celebration at His wedding to His Bride, the wine-giving Bridegroom died.

7 As wine at a wedding banquet marked the first miracle of Jesus, so will choice, abundant wine mark the eternal banquet at His miraculous return. On that day, when the Bridegroom returns for His Bride, the wine will

flow freely and abundantly. It will be choicer wine than you have ever tasted, and the jars that once stood for ritual cleansing will never empty of the wine that stands for your having been cleansed by the death and resurrection of your Lord, and washed with the eternally cleansing water of His Holy Baptism.

8 His good gifts are yours to receive. Even though your sins drive you to despair, even though your sins earn your death, there is wine for you. Here is strong drink for the one perishing and wine for the one in bitter distress. He who made choice wine from ordinary water makes choice drink—His Blood—from ordinary wine. The Blood of Jesus is the choicest wine, the finest vintage. Most hosts would bring out the best wine first and bring out the cheap stuff later, but here your Host brings out the best, the priceless wine now made blood after you've tasted the bitterness of life. Here is strong drink for the one who is perishing, and wine for the one in bitter distress. Drink the Blood of Jesus and forget your poverty and remember your misery no more.

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

*Soli Deo Gloria*  
Pastor Jeff Hemmer  
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