

## A BEAUTIFUL WEDDING SERMON

John 2:1-11 | Second Sunday after Epiphany | January 17/20, 2019

*Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."*

**J.J.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Actions speak louder than words. It's one thing to say, "I love you." It's another to show it by getting on one knee and taking a sparkling diamond out of your pocket. It's one thing to say, "I'll be there. You can count on me." It's quite another thing to actually show up. It's one thing for a child to say, "I'll take care of the new puppy. I promise!" It's another thing altogether to bathe the puppy, brush the puppy, walk the puppy, feed the puppy and clean up after the puppy.

In the portion of God's Word before us today Jesus really doesn't say much. Now Jesus' words, no matter how few, are always packed with meaning. But in this text I think his actions speak even louder than his words. His actions preach a sermon for us today. Since the setting for our text is a wedding we could say his actions preach A BEAUTIFUL WEDDING SERMON. Like all good wedding sermons, this one focuses not on the happy couple, but on their Savior. It's a sermon about Jesus' love for marriage. It's a sermon about Jesus' compassion for people. It's a sermon about Jesus' glory as Savior.

### **I. About Jesus' Love for Marriage**

About a week or so after Jesus' baptism

he and his growing group of disciples traveled to Cana in Galilee to enjoy a wedding feast. Now weddings in those days were quite a bit different from what we're used to. A man and woman would make their promises to one another. At this point they were legally married. Several weeks after this, the groom would pick up the bride and take her to his home to live with him. At that time they would have the wedding celebration. At our receptions we get together for a few hours to eat some beef tips, have a beer or two and do the Hokey Pokey. In those days the celebrating was done on a much grander scale. If the couple could afford it the party would last a week or more. The entire village would be invited.

We're not exactly sure how Jesus and his disciples came to be invited, but his presence shows his deep love and respect for marriage. Think of all the other ways Jesus could have been spending his time. He could have stayed at the Jordan to preach to the crowds who came out to hear John the Baptist. He could have been in Jerusalem debating with the other rabbis. He could have been traveling the dusty roads looking for more disciples. He could have done any of a number of things—but he didn't. Jesus had a wedding to go to. His attendance reveals

his love for marriage.

Today I would hardly describe marriage as a beloved institution. This gift from God is under attack from all sides. People these days often think about getting married in the same way they think about buying a used car. They like to kick the tires and take a test drive. “Let’s live together for a while,” they say. “Let’s try things out and see if we’re compatible.” That certainly doesn’t honor marriage, which God says is to be a lifelong commitment. It dirties the marriage bed that God wants to be kept pure (Hebrews 13:4). Jesus attended a wedding. He doesn’t attend sleepovers.

For many in this day and age the whole idea of marriage is a joke. Just think of what comes into our homes through the TV screen. How many shows today portray marriage in a God-pleasing light? I’m embarrassed sometimes just by the commercials for these TV shows that run during the football game on Sunday afternoon. Jesus would hardly enjoy watching much of the immoral trash that is piped into our homes.

Why, you don’t even need a man and a woman to have a wedding anymore! Two men together is just fine. Two women— isn’t that nice? If you speak out against this kind of behavior you’ll be accused of the cardinal sin in our world today: judging. But, keep in mind, Jesus doesn’t give his approval to such unnatural unions. He gives his approval to marriage—one man, one woman, for life.

You know, our attitude about marriage isn’t always the best either. Jesus attends

our marriages every day. Does he like what he sees? Does he like it when the husband acts more like a couch potato than the spiritual head of the family? Does he like when the wife steps out of her role as helper and decides to take charge? Does he like it when husband and wife quarrel more than they communicate? Does he like it when the family Bible collects dust while the TV and computer are warm and well-used?

You know the answers to these questions. Jesus set a priority when he went to that wedding. His actions show his love for marriage. Sadly, our thoughts, words and actions often show our contempt for marriage. This is sin, sin that, like all others, earns us an eternity of punishment.

But, friends, that’s where the good news comes in! Our actions often show our mixed up priorities. But Jesus actions show what was important to him. They show his compassion for sinners like you and me. He cares for us, body and soul.

## II. About Jesus’ Compassion for People

Listen again to what Jesus did: <sup>7</sup> **Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. <sup>8</sup> Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, <sup>9</sup> and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine ... Then he called the bridegroom aside <sup>10</sup> and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine ... but you have saved the best till now.”**

The wedding couple was faced with an embarrassing situation. They had run out of wine. It would be like having to stand up at your wedding reception and say, “Sorry, folks. We’re out of food. If you’d still like something to eat there’s a Burger King next door.” Granted, life would have gone on for these two if Jesus had not intervened. But those empty wine vessels threatened to diminish the joy of their feast. It wasn’t a matter of life and death. But to them it was a real problem.

With one action Jesus took care of the problem and gave them a generous wedding gift. He gave them about 120 gallons of wine. And we’re not talking about Boone’s Farm. He gave them the finest wine around. It was so good that even the master of the banquet was impressed. Jesus didn’t give them just enough to scrape by. He gave them a rich gift from the riches of his grace.

Like the wedding couple we all face problems—little ones, big ones, in-between ones. A flat tire on the way to work. A D on the geometry test. A notice to clean out the desk by Friday. A spouse lying in a hospital bed. There’s no shortage of trouble in this life. What a comfort to know that Jesus sees our problems and has the solutions. When the time is right he will act and do what is best for us. He may not solve the problem the way we think he should. But he promises to make things work out for our eternal good (Ro 8:28). At Cana he solved a problem and showed his compassion for people. Remember, Jesus has compassion for you too!

### III. About Jesus’ Glory as Savior

It’s clear that Jesus can take care of our small problems. But can he take care of our biggest problem—the sin and guilt that so plague us? Answer: Yes he can. His actions at Cana show us exactly what he is capable of. They show us who he is. They show us his glory as Savior.

At that wedding feast Jesus did something only God can do. He took plain water and changed it into fine wine. Nothing was added to the water. They didn’t find some forgotten bottles lying around. There was no trick. This was a miracle, something that goes beyond our ability. But it wasn’t a problem for Jesus. The Son of God had no problem taking care of the wine shortage. The Lord of creation, who designed and created H<sub>2</sub>O had no difficulty changing it into wine.

John, who was there and no doubt tasted the wine Jesus made, wrote this: **What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.** A sign is something that points to something else. Dark skies on the horizon are a sign of a coming storm. Oil spots on the floor of your garage are a sign of possible car trouble. Contractions are a sign that the baby is coming soon. The miracle Jesus performed at that wedding is a sure sign that he is who he claims to be. He is the Son of God. He is the promised Messiah. He is the Savior of all.

The changing of water into wine is just one of many signs Jesus did. Later he

would walk on water, feed a multitude, calm a storm, drive out demons, heal the sick and even raise the dead. Every one of these signs is like a giant, glowing billboard announcing in big bold letters, “JESUS IS LORD! JESUS IS GOD! JESUS IS SAVIOR!”

Friends, that’s not just an abstract theological fact. It’s a real truth that has real meaning for your life. Jesus is Lord and Savior. His actions show that you can take him at his word. He says, **“I came to seek and to save what was lost.”** And you know what? He did. He says, **“The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”** Yes. He really did. He says, **“It is finished.”** And it is! He says, **“Take heart, your sins are forgiven.”** And they are – including all our failures as husbands and wives and single people, our lust, our infidelities, our same-sex attractions, all the times we have despised God’s plan for marriage and family – it’s all gone, washed away in the blood of the Lamb! He says, **“Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.”** And that’s exactly what happened. Jesus rose! Jesus lives! He says, **“I am going to heaven to prepare a place for you.”** That’s just what he is doing.

Dear friends, like the disciples who tasted that miraculous wine, put your trust in Jesus. He is your loving, compassionate and glorious Savior. Amen.

**S.D.G.**