

## Hayward United Methodist Church

Pastor Samuel's Message for Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost, August 15, 2021

**"You Have Kept the Good Wine Until Now?"**

Text: John 2:1-11

**Gospel Reading: John 2:7-11 (NRSV)**

Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward 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 steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This is the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

**Prayer for Illumination (UMH 6)**

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that, as the Scriptures are read and your word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

There are two statements to ponder on in the Gospel reading. One is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She came and said, "They have no wine." The other is Jesus's response. Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come." What could we make of those two important statements? One is coming from Jesus's mother and the other is coming from the Son of God. Both represent earth and heaven. One represents the reality we face in our everyday life. The other represents the heavenly voice in response to our daily prayers.

In the Lord's prayer, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." At the same time, we pray, "Thy Kingdom come." Jesus came to reconcile heaven to earth and earth to heaven. He is the mediator between heaven and earth. He could see our needs from an earthly point of view. He could also respond from a heavenly point of view. Because Jesus came down from heaven to live among us. He bore upon the

suffering of humanity. He came to lead us from earthly life to eternal life. In Jesus we will find our needs met here and now and we will also find life eternal which lies beyond the earthly life. We bring our needs to God in worship and we receive abundant blessings from God, which will continue beyond the earthly life. That's why coming to worship is very important. We encounter God in worship.

John records an important event in the life of Jesus. Jesus came to public ministry. He was baptized. He came to take away the sins of the people. He is called "the Lamb of God." The next day he called the first disciples which included Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel and one former disciple of John the Baptist. Other disciples joined him later. Then on the third day there was a wedding at Cana of Galilee which was only few miles away from Jesus's home town of Nazareth where he grew up. Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding. Jesus's mother was already there. Probably the bride's or the groom's family was related to Jesus's mother. Because Jesus's mother was serving more like a host. She was supervising the dinner arrangements. It was a very happy occasion. This story is found only in John's Gospel. This is a unique story with lot of things to meditate on.

First, we encounter Jesus's mother with a request. Everything was going well. Jesus was happy to see her own son along with the disciples. Jesus had a busy ministry ahead. He took time to be there. Probably Jesus's mother brought him there. Everyone was happy and rejoicing and having great food and wine. There was one problem. There was no problem to begin with. The food and wine looked great. It was Jewish custom to serve wine on important occasions. Even the Sabbath meal was served with wine. The Jewish Passover meal was served with wine. Wine was considered as part of food until today.

Back then, more people would show up at wedding than invited guests. The invited guests also bring their friends to the wedding. There was no way of knowing how many would actually show up. Sometimes, the hosts would be prepared for a huge number and other times the hosts would not be read for uninvited guests. Probably lot of people came at the last minute to just see Jesus. Jesus was already becoming famous as he attracted many disciples.

The problem arose suddenly as many guests showed up. They ran out of wine. It would be a disgrace on the part of the groom to run out of food. Most of near

eastern weddings take place in the evenings. It was an odd time to buy food or wine. If it were during day time, the host would go to the market to buy food and wine. Where could they find a seller in the evening to buy wine. Jesus's mother came to Jesus and said that they have no wine. It seems Jesus's mother knew that Jesus could do something in the times of need.

Jesus's mother represents the reality of life. In real life, we always run out of something. There's shortage of food. There is unemployment. There is sickness. There is natural calamity. There is loss of loved ones. There is suffering. The list goes on and on. Everyday we counter something that makes life difficult. It happens suddenly and accidentally, whether we expect it or not. There is always something to deal with in life. The wedding party was going on as planned. But suddenly something went wrong. There was shortage of wine. The host couldn't solve the problem. It was out of control. What could have been done better? Jesus's mother brought the request to Jesus. She knew Jesus had power to do something.

Second, Jesus steps in to solve the problem. When Jesus's mother brought the problem to attention, Jesus referred to his intention to act in his own time. He said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?" My hour has not yet come." (Jn 2:5). Jesus distances himself from his mother. He doesn't address his mother as mother, but as woman. Because Jesus stands here not as Mary's son but as God's Son. He came to do the will of God. He was separated from his family after he was baptized. Jesus would also address his mother as woman at the foot of the cross (cf. Jn 19:26). He committed her to the beloved disciple to care for. It shows that he was concerned about her mother until his death.

Jesus would listen to his mother or to anybody. Jesus welcomes anyone to come to him. He never turns anyone away. He would certainly fulfill all our requests. Nothing is hard for Jesus. But Jesus would not be pushed to act. He would wait on God. He would do what God asks him to do. He will do it. But we wouldn't know when he would act. Time to act belongs to his own will. When he acts, he will pour out his blessings. Sometimes, Jesus delays. When Lazarus was sick and died, Jesus delayed for four days. He did not come right away to save Lazarus. Anyhow Jesus came and raised Lazarus from the dead.

**Jesus determined to act in his own time. Jesus's mother turned to the servants and asked them to do whatever Jesus would command. The attention turns to the servants. But the servants are waiting for orders. Jesus asked them to fill in the stone water jars with water. They were kept there for ceremonial washing of hands. It was just ordinary water. It was not even intended for drinking. The servants obeyed. At some point the water turned into wine, not just ordinary wine, but fine and excellent wine which no one tasted before.**

**The miracle has already taken place as the servants were filling the jars with water. It was the work of God. No one ever saw the water turning into wine. When the chief steward came and tasted it, it was no longer water. It was real wine, better than the one served at the beginning of the wedding feast. The chief steward made a public statement. He said, "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" (Jn 2:10). What a way to end the party! It is because Jesus performed a miracle. Only few knew it. John adds, "Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him" (Jn 2:11).**

**Are you running empty? Are you running out of energy? Are you in need? Is there something in life that causes scarcity? Nothing to worry. Just like the mother of Jesus brought it to Jesus's attention, just take it to the Lord in prayer. Jesus will take the ordinary and make it extraordinary. Jesus will give you plenty that you could hardly carry. Jesus will give you the good thing when everything runs out. He will fill your life with abundant blessings. When we come to Jesus with our requests whether it is small or big, Jesus will fulfill all our needs more than we expected. Jesus said, "But strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Mt 6:33).**

**God Bless.**

**Pastor Samuel**

**Let's say the Benediction together:**

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all. Amen.**