



Call to Worship - "Whoever trusts in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these" (John 14: 12)

Hymn - STF 608 - All praise to our redeeming Lord,

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face. | 4 | E'en now we think and speak the same,
and cordially agree ;
concentred all, through Jesu's name,
in perfect harmony. |
| 2 | He bids us build each other up ;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on. | 5 | We all partake the joy of one,
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds unknown,
a joy unspeakable. |
| 3 | The gift which he on one bestows,
we all delight to prove ;
the grace through every vessel flows,
in purest streams of love. | 6 | And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what heights of rapture shall we know
when round his throne we meet ! |

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Prayer

Creator God, abundant giver, at a wedding in Cana you turned the ordinary into the extraordinary. We come to you, ready for you to turn our ordinariness into something extraordinary for you today. We praise you for all the miracles you perform and pray that we may recognise them as such. We also ask for your forgiveness for when we have strayed from the path shown us by Jesus. May we know that you forgive us and transform us, just as you did to the water at Cana. Amen.

Scripture: St John's Gospel Chapter 2 verses 1 – 11.

Reflection

I've heard many misinterpretations of this familiar passage of scripture so what do we know? Jesus is at the party. The party runs out of wine. Nobody from the wedding party bothers to tell Jesus. It's just as well as when his mother brings up the matter, he essentially brushes her off. She informs him, "They have no wine." Jesus replies, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me?" She looks at him with maternal pressure. Jesus brushes off his mother's request saying "It's not my hour. It's not my time." She backs off from her request, and then he makes the wine.

So what is going on here? Is this a story about a wedding? I don't think so. It is a story about who Jesus is. And there are three clues which help us to understand this story better.

The first is this: Jesus uses a village feast, not as an opportunity to make people happy, but as an opportunity to reveal God. The writer says, "This was the first time Jesus revealed God's glory." Jesus stood before them with the power to turn water into wine but some people missed it entirely. All they could do is comment on the quality of the wine. Jesus revealed the glory of God, not in the religious ceremony but in the middle of a wedding party, a very common human occasion and in a specific human person, Jesus Christ - the eternal Word becomes flesh. Knowing this does more than make people happy. It satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart.

Secondly, if the human Jesus is to reveal the everlasting God, some established customs are broken. At Cana, Jesus used six large stone jars as carafes for new wine. Those jars were normally filled with water for purification ceremonies. Jesus claimed the authority to break the rules and put those jars to another use. For those who knew what he was doing, it was disturbing, to say the least. How would we react if a baptismal party after the service used the baptismal font as a drinks bowl? But effectively that's what Jesus did to disclose the presence and power of God. Jesus is not interested in maintaining religious customs, rituals or established patterns; He is concerned with bringing us into the presence of the eternal God.

And with Jesus around every day is the day when we can see miracles, significant transformations that happen in your life or mine, no less far-reaching as what happened that day in Cana. When such a moment happens, the actual event is significant, but it's nowhere as important as what happens to us in the midst of the event, where we can recognize Christ's holy presence is with us.

That can mean we have to let go of the old patterns, the familiar ways, and the comfortable habits. That's not easy. The work of Jesus Christ in our lives is always about making something new: establishing new

relationships, making a new start. Changes can be disruptive. They demand all the strength and courage we can find. But if we are able to embrace what God is doing, we may find that some of the best wine has been saved until now.

Finally, the third insight into the story, namely, when new life comes, when the new wine is poured, it is the gift of Jesus Christ. He alone chooses to give the new wine. No one can force him to give it, not even his own mother. No one can tell him what to do. And when Jesus does choose to act, he does so entirely from his own initiative. Intentionally and deliberately, for he is the Lord, He comes to show us what God is like.

On the third day, Jesus turned water into wine. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. And if every day is the third day, there's no telling what the Risen Christ might do among you and me, as he comes in the wild, unpredictable grace of God. Amen

For you to think about:

- Where do we see God doing extraordinary things in our everyday ordinary lives?
- Is there something in your life that needs to change? And who can help you?

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray.

For the world and its people,
for places of famine and epidemic,
for war zones and disaster areas...

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For politicians and journalists,
for all who work in the media,
and those who have no one to speak for them...

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the unemployed,
for those who use local food banks
and those who run them...

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who are ill,
for the very old and very young
and those who care for them...
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the leaders of all our faith communities,
for those who lead our churches,
and for those who worship and pray here...
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer
and reveal your glory. Amen.**

*(based on a prayer published in Roots for this
Sunday)*

Our Father, who art in heaven

Hymn – STF 228 - Hail to the Lord's Anointed

1 Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

2 He comes, with succour speedy,
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
are precious in his sight.

3 He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
love, joy, and hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth;
before him, on the mountains,
shall peace the herald go;

and righteousness, in fountains,
from hill to valley flow.

4 Kings shall fall down before him,
and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him,
his praise all people sing;
to him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.

5 O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever,
his changeless name of Love.

James Montgomery (1771–1854)
from Psalm

Blessing

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be with you and those you love, this day and for ever more. **Amen**