



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

January 19, 2025

Pastor David Ruddat

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson: [Isaiah 62:1-5](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 145b CW

Second Lesson: [Ephesians 3:14-21](#)

Gospel Lesson/ Sermon Text: [John 2:1-11](#)

### EPHIPHANY MOMENTS

#### God Delivers More Than We Ask, Not Less

#### JESUS REVEALS WHO HE ALWAYS IS

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father through our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ.

*Your presence gracious God afford  
Prepare us to receive your Word.  
Now let your voice engage our ear  
And faith be mixed with what we hear.  
Distracting thoughts and cares remove  
And fix our hearts and hopes above.  
With food divine may we be fed,  
And satisfied with living bread. Amen.*

Joseph Scriven's mother was going through a hard time, so he wrote a poem meant to comfort her; a poem which we are very familiar with, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!" It's a beautiful poem. It's a beautiful hymn because it takes us away from our problems and takes us to the One who can do something about our problems—the One who answers our prayer. When Jesus answers our prayers, and when Jesus answers the prayer in our text today, we see how Jesus reveals who He is. He is a Savior who answers our prayers, not always for the reason that we would expect and not always in the way that we would expect, but in doing so, in answering our prayers, Jesus reveals who He really is.

No wedding has had so much publicity, so much spoken about it than the wedding at Cana. Yet we don't know who got married that day. We don't know what hymns they

sang or what lessons they used. All we know is that Jesus was there and that they ran out of wine. The wedding feast lasted a week. You would have visitors coming and going throughout the week, so it's very plausible that they would miscalculate how much wine they would need. Mary, the mother of Jesus, somehow has some connection with this family, so she goes to Jesus with a request and says, ***"They have no more wine."***

When I hear these words of Mary, I am reminded of the words of my wife. We are sitting there in the living room and she says, "I'm cold." The dad in me says "Hi cold," but that's not the right answer. She is being indirect. "I'm cold" means she either wants me to finally turn on the thermostat (if it's in the fall), or she wants me to turn up the thermostat or give her a blanket or something, so it's an indirect request. Mary coming to Jesus, she says, ***"They have no more wine."*** It's an indirect request. She wants Jesus to do something about it.

Is it wrong for Mary to come to Jesus? Certainly not! In the Lord's Prayer, we remember that we can come before our Father in freedom and confidence. We can come before our God because of Jesus Christ and come before Him with whatever is going on in our minds—whatever difficulties we are facing—because we have the freedom to do so and we have the confidence that God will act on our prayers. Maybe He will say "Yes, that's a good prayer. I'm going to answer it." Maybe He is going to say "Maybe you should have really prayed this prayer" and He is going to answer that prayer instead. Maybe He is going to say "That's a good prayer. You better stew on that for a little bit because this is something that will increase your faith as you are praying for it." Like if you are praying for your spouse or praying for a spouse for your kids—those kinds of things where this is an ongoing thing but the answer is always "Wait, I have things in motion." It certainly was not wrong for Mary to ask of Jesus and say, ***"They have no more wine"*** knowing that He knows exactly what she means when she says ***"They have no more wine."***

However, in Jesus' response, we see that there was a tinge of something in that request. Jesus says, ***"Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come."*** Now before we take our 21<sup>st</sup> Century ears and say "Woah! Woah! Woah! It's disrespectful to call her a 'woman.' He is kind of being derogatory," let's let Jesus define how He is using that word "woman." He uses the same phrase when He talks to a woman who has great faith. It's a term of respect. But yes, it's also a term of distance. The picture of "why do you involve me" in Greek is basically very simple. "What, me and you." "What is this between me and you?" It reminds us and reminds Mary that yes, she is talking to God. Yes, she can bring her request to God, but don't forget who is God and who is Mary.

Jesus, being God, knows that she is kind of putting herself in God's spot and saying "Jesus, this is what you should do." In doing so, she is breaking the First Commandment. She is forgetting, fear, love and trust in God above all things. In doing

so, she is not much different than you and I when we are praying to God. Oftentimes we look at God as some sort of vending machine that "God, if I do this or that, you must do these things for me;" as if God should show us favoritism because of who we are or what we have done. We forget who is God and who is us, and in doing so, we break the First Commandment. We forget who is in charge. We want God at our beck and call to answer our prayers according to the way that we want them answered.

But thankfully, Jesus knows exactly what the First Commandment is. He knows exactly who He is and He knows exactly who Mary is, and He still acts. He still responds to her prayer.

Mary does something very interesting right after that. It says, ***His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."*** Somehow she has some sort of influence with the servants that she is transferring her influence and authority over to Jesus. ***"Do whatever he tells you."*** Some commentators like to read into this and say Mary was saying "Jesus, if you're not going to listen to me as your mother, you had better listen to these servants because they are on the bottom of the totem pole and Jesus, you are always looking out for the little guy so you should at least listen to those little guys." But I don't see that in the text. Jesus doesn't respond. If He had responded to a little tinge of First Commandment problems, He would respond also if this were manipulation. But rather, I would see in Mary's response my wife, after 23 years, when I say "What car should we buy?" "Should I take this call or not?" "What devotion book should we use?" And she says "Whatever." This is Mary being like Ruth to Naomi— "Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay." ([Ruth 1:16](#)) This is a statement of faith. "Whatever He tells you." If Jesus tells the servants, "Disperse the crowd. The wedding is over because we ran out of something to drink," then that was what they were going to do and she was okay with that. If Jesus said to the servants, "Go to the next town and buy some more wine," Mary was okay with that. However Jesus handled the situation, Mary was okay with that. And Jesus handles the situation not in the way that you would expect.

If you and I were going to pick the first time we are going to do a miracle (if we had the ability to do a miracle) and we are going to do this miracle in front of a whole crowd of people, how would we do it? I know how I would do it. There would be spotlights. There would be a microphone, an MC saying "Come around everybody! Gather around because Pastor Dave Ruddat is going to do a miracle! There is going to be quite a show going on here today!" There would be all kinds of attention directed to what is going to happen, but that's not what happens. Listen.

***Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."***

***They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. 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."***

Jesus, who should have had the center stage at this wedding at Cana, is way behind the scenes. He is not the center of attention. There is no spotlight shining on Him. In fact, where is the spotlight?—on the bridegroom. One hundred twenty to one hundred eighty gallons of water turned into the best wine ever and only the servants know? Jesus abundantly blesses the bridal couple with a good amount of wine and it was better than anything the bridegroom had prepared, and it was completely behind the scenes.

In Jesus providing the wine at the wedding of Cana, **He reveals who He always is.** He reveals how our God provides for us richly and daily and we say it so flippantly in catechism class, natural needs. Natural needs, as if there is nothing miraculous about it. It's just normal. But our God allows us to work, for crops to grow, animals to get big, animals to produce, jobs to produce money for ourselves. Not only do we have a house to live in and clothes to wear, but we have an abundance of possessions. And who gets all the credit? "I have this job and I'm doing this and I'm working here and I'm doing that." Who gets all the credit? Natural needs—**Jesus reveals who God always is**, who provides for us richly and daily. He is our Heavenly Father.

Why does He do this? It's because He is our loving Father in heaven; not because we have earned it or deserved it. Oh, how we forget that! We forget how richly blessed we are. We focus on the things that we don't have. And we forget who our God is again. But Jesus remains our God. He remains the One who provides. Why? It's because He loves us and His love for us is taking care of not just an embarrassment of being without something but a love that means He is going to send His Son, Jesus, to live and die for us, to keep those commandments for us, and to die on the cross for all the times that we were ungrateful, undeserving, the times that we didn't recognize how our Bridegroom had come into our lives and had blessed us with blessings beyond measure.

At the wedding at Cana Jesus answers Mary's prayer, not for the reasons that you would expect, not in the way that you would expect either, but as you see through the pages of Scripture, **Jesus**, at this wedding, **reveals who He always is**—our God and our Savior who abundantly provides. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.