

Sermon
Epiphany 2—C
St. Andrew's, Methuen
January 16, 2022
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Isaiah 62:1-5
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11
Psalm 36:5-10

One Saturday afternoon I'm home from college listening to music in my room with my neighbor and great friend David, when my father who has just returned from a wedding, walks in and says: "Boys, the bubbly was knee deep!"

The same could be said about the wedding in Cana of Galilee—The wine was knee deep, but only after Jesus steps in and saves the host from the shame of running out of wine before he runs out of guests.

For us children of the enlightenment this is a weird story, since we are taught that the universe is a closed system of absolute laws and that not even God can break in, rendering God external and useless to our daily lives.

For others who want to be religious they imagine this god is on the outside looking in, judging us harshly when we break the rules.

But what if God is on the inside if life. What if, as theologian and Franciscan sister Ilia Delio says: "God is not supernatural... not above but within and ahead, the infinite depth and ultimacy of life."

Therefore, in the signs of Jesus, the place to look is not outside, but inside, and to ask what is Jesus revealing about the nature and character of God who is closer to us than we are to ourselves?

The really interesting thing about this story is not that water becomes wine, since wine producers do that wonderfully well in Napa Valley, California and Bordeaux, France. **What is interesting is that Jesus is showing us that God transforms life from the inside in order to heal our brokenness.**

The meaning of the sign of water being turned into wine is not that now should go around trying to do the same thing. The meaning is that we

should go around trying to free people from their shame and sin, so that they might know again the abundant joy of God living in them.

The “Word became flesh” in order to reveal and release the Divine Light shining out of our lives. Jesus does this by removing the barriers to us seeing the Divine Light.

IN his presence shame, sin, sickness, and death, even death on a cross, cannot hide the Diving Light shining forth from the children of God.

Therefore, it makes sense that throughout the gospels we see Jesus going toward, not running from those whose inner Light is blocked by their brokenness.

John calls what Jesus does at the wedding in Cana **his first sign**. Not his first miracle or work of power but his first sign.

What is it a sign of?

We could ask the same question of the sign of Jesus feeding the 5000 on the hillside. Put the two together and we see Jesus nourishing the people with bread and wine—bread to strengthen the body and wine to gladden the soul that they may **sing “this little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine”**.

At the Last Supper the bread and wine are signs of his body and blood that are to taken internally to heal the sickness and shame that keep the Divine Light under the basket so it can’t shine into a dark world.

Every Eucharist is an invitation to let God feed us with Christ to free us **from** our sin and fear, in order to free us **for** our mission to the world.

In John 8:12 Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

And in Matthew 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

In John 10:10 Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

As a freshman at the University of Georgia I was haunted by that verse I heard at a meeting of Campus Crusade for Christ. I had everything a person could ever want, yet I was oddly depressed.

This verse ran up against the enlightenment project to scrub God and mystery from my life. **Which would it be:** Life as “abundant life in Christ” or life as “abundant life in the accumulation of stuff”?

Life as letting God shine or life as letting success and stuff shine?

That’s why it is so important to take time to pray, to read scripture, and to reflect on which life I am going to choose to live this day.

My father requested that white wine be served at the reception following his funeral.

To me it was a sign that the Light of Christ is never overcome by death.

 Jesus, of course, is accused of being a drunk and hanging around drunks. It’s the same attack made on the day of Pentecost when the disciples start dancing and singing in ecstatic languages, because their hearts could not contain the joy caused by the Spirit.

Some in the crowd say to Peter, “These people are drunk on new wine!”

To which Peter responds, “it’s only 9 o’clock in the morning.... They are not drunk but filled with the light of the Spirit that bears witness, to “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know”.

 At the wedding in Cana, **Mary’s says to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”**

They do nothing more than pour water into empty jars, yet that small obedience is all God needs to shine through their lives.

 Martin Luther King, Jr puts it this way: **“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”.**

“Do whatever he tells you” And then God’s Light will shine.