

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶Six stone water jars, which the Jews used for ceremonial cleansing, were standing there, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. ⁸Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." And they did.

⁹When the master of the banquet tasted the water that had now become wine, he did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew). The master of the banquet called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!"

¹¹This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. This is God's Word.

Dear Friends,

When's the last time you said, "I've had an epiphany?" That's a phrase you might have heard people say at one time but like many words and phrases, people don't know what an epiphany is anymore. Church people hear that word occasionally, especially when we are in the season of Epiphany, but even church people don't always know what it means.

An "epiphany" is a sudden revealing about the nature or meaning of something. The miracles of Jesus are epiphanies of Jesus – they show us or reveal to us something about him. As we consider the 1st miracle Jesus performed in Cana, **"Jesus is giving us a glimpse of his glory."** **"This was important for the mother of Jesus as he began his public ministry,"** **"This brought a special blessing to the bride and groom"** and **"This helped his disciples in their spiritual life as they put their faith in him."**

I. "Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding." As we hear about this wedding did you note the difference in description between Jesus' mother and Jesus and his disciples? Jesus' mother was there – in other words she was probably helping with the wedding. There's a good chance that this was the wedding of a relative and Mary had some responsibility to make sure everything was taken care of. Jesus, on the other hand, was invited and his disciples would have been invited as well because they were his followers – they went where he went. At this time there were at least six disciples – Andrew, Peter, James, John, Philip, and Nathanael.

Wedding celebrations usually lasted seven days. We don't know if Jesus was there for the whole seven days or if he came somewhere in the middle but the events that are about to unfold probably happened 3 or 4 days into the festivities.

³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." I wish we could see into Mary's mind and know what she was thinking. Was she asking Jesus as her son or as the Son of God to take care of this problem? All we really know is that there was a problem and Mary let Jesus know about the problem – she didn't ask him to solve it or even suggest how he might solve it – she just brought her problem to him.

"⁴Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet." Jesus is basically telling his mother that he will take care of this in his own way and in his own time. He also calls his mother, "woman" making it clear that he is speaking to her as her Savior and not as her Son. He knew what was going on and he knew what he was going to do about it.

Mary recognized this and told the servants, **"Do whatever he tells you."** She wanted to make sure that the servants would listen to this wedding guest and follow his direction whenever the time might come. That really should be our attitude also when it comes to our Savior – to listen to him speak to us through his Word and to do whatever he tells us to do as we live for him.

Has Jesus ever performed a miracle in your life? I would guess that some of you might answer "yes" to that question. Maybe the miracle of healing or maybe you were somehow saved from a dangerous situation or maybe you had some type of great need and it was filled in an unexpected way – even though God usually uses natural means to take care of us, sometimes he uses a miracle.

Mary already knew Jesus was God's Son. The angel Gabriel had revealed that before he was born but now Jesus was beginning his public ministry and their relationship would change. Not that Jesus hadn't been God's Son before this and not that he hadn't been the perfect son in every way, but now he was also identifying himself to his mother as her Savior. For Mary needed a Savior from sin just as each one of us needs a Savior from sin.

We recognize Jesus as God's Son just as Mary did and we want to look to him to help us with our problems just as she did – no matter how great or small. We see Mary's complete trust in Jesus as she instructed the servants to do whatever he asked. She didn't know how he would solve the problem – she just trusted that he would. And so it should be with us – to ask God to help us with our problems and to accept that he will solve them in the way he knows is best for us and then to trust him to do so.

We don't always come to God with the right attitude and sometimes we are somewhat arrogant in telling him how to fix things for us but our God is so patient and loving to us that he answers our prayers in the best way anyway and forgives our attitude and arrogance.

What a wonderful day it was when Jesus performed that first miracle but Mary wasn't the only one that day who saw Jesus as God's Son. The Bridal couple also experienced the blessings of God's Son

II. “Six stone water jars, which the Jews used for ceremonial cleansing, were standing there, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim.” These water jars were used for ceremonial washing. In other words, the people used the water in these jars to wash their hands before eating. I would have to guess that the servants emptied the jars before refilling them with fresh water. We don’t know how long this took or if Jesus approached the servants right after Mary talked to him, but sometime during that day these jars were filled according to Jesus’ request.

The Jesus told them that when the master of the banquet calls for more wine, take him some of this liquid from the water jars. Imagine their surprise when they dipped a cup of it out and it was red wine instead of clear water. **“The master of the banquet called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!”**” The master didn’t know where the wine had come from but it was pretty good. He took the bridegroom aside to let him know he had done things backwards. This is the wine that should have been served first. I wonder how long before the bridegroom asked the servants what had happened. I would guess it didn’t take long for the news of this miracle to spread through the crowd.

When the couple invited Jesus do you think they expected anything special at their wedding? I don’t think so. They saw Jesus as Mary’s Son, another relative, to help join in their celebration. Imagine their surprise when they found out what had happened. Not only had Jesus kept them from running out of wine and facing the embarrassment of poor planning, but he had also provided an abundant supply of the best. What a wonderful gift Jesus, God’s Son, gave them.

Some of the best gifts are those unexpected gifts: The gift you give a person because you want to, not because some special event prompts a gift. Did you know that you have an opportunity to share a valuable gift with someone? You have the gift of salvation – the gift of knowing Jesus as your Savior and that is a wonderful gift to share.

Even if you have trouble talking to people, you can invite them to come and hear a message that will bring them peace and joy and just as that bridal couple was surprised by what Jesus did for them, so will the person you invite be surprised in the same way, when they learn about Jesus’ gift for them too. Start thinking and praying about someone you can invite to church to hear about Jesus. We will have a special Friendship Sunday on February 10th to give you an opportunity to invite someone to come and receive the gift of salvation declared in the good news about Jesus.

But Jesus had another purpose in mind as he performed this miracle on that day so many years ago. He wanted to help his disciples too.

III. “¹¹This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.” Through this miracle Jesus gave his disciples a glimpse of his glory. He had already been identified to them as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and the Promised Messiah but the disciples needed encouragement. They needed to see evidence that Jesus is God’s Son. Jesus knew this miracle

would help prepare them for the future – for the times ahead when they would face challenges and when they, themselves, would reach out with the Gospel message.

Could you imagine living your life without knowing Jesus as your Lord and Savior? You would have a whole different set of values if you had never heard God's Word. You would probably believe abortion is okay and would be very accepting of different lifestyles even if some people called them "sinful." Your goals in life would be pretty self-centered. Marriage might be part of your life but you would see nothing wrong with living together. When tragedy happened to come your way you would latch onto anything that would give you some degree of hope but would feel lost in so many ways. Lying and cheating would be acceptable as long as you don't get caught. What a terrible way to live and then death would only bring everlasting suffering.

Life without Christ is a terrible way to live and yet as I described some of those things, you might know someone who lives that way. Someone without hope because they don't know Jesus. They have not had this epiphany that you have had – to see Jesus as God's Son. To know that he came into the world as a human being so he could suffer for our sins and yet to know Jesus is also true God so that he could pay the penalty of sin for all people for all time. That is an epiphany that brings us peace and comfort and it's an epiphany we want to share. Just as the disciples saw this side of Jesus, so we want to see it and share it with others.

Jesus is God's Son. The evidence is there in the miracles he performed and the people he healed. Jesus is God's Son. The evidence is there in the cross where he paid for our sins and especially in his rising from the dead on Easter morning. He is part of your life for he has redeemed you with his holy precious blood. He is part of your life because he has called you to faith – that too is a miracle – a miracle God performed just for you.

Treasure this news and share it. Invite someone to come and hear the epiphanies of our Lord so they too can know Jesus as God's Son and their Savior. Amen.