

Running out of wine at a wedding is not a matter of life and death. No one is healed of a serious illness here. No one is made to see again or to walk again. No one is raised from the dead. They're out of wine. On the Richter scale of miracles, what Jesus does here at Cana is perhaps a 1.3. Not an earth-shaking event. He saves a wedding. He prevents a groom and his bride from much embarrassment. Jesus changes water into wine so that the celebration can continue.

But hardly anyone is aware of what He does. The servants know, but not the master of the feast. His disciples know, but not all the others who are invited. St. John writes that this miracle is a sign. It's the first of Jesus' signs. But it's not a gigantic billboard. It's a rather small sign that is mostly hidden from view, and hardly anyone sees it. Jesus' disciples see it, and we're told that "*they believed in Him.*" And you see it. St. John later writes that "*these things are written so that you may believe.*" But what are we to believe? How does this sign inform us?

Some say it informs them that it's okay to drink wine. At the very least, at wedding receptions. And it is informative that Jesus honors marriage with His presence here at Cana. But others are curious why Jesus appears to dishonor His mother. "*Woman,*" He calls her. Not "mother." "*Woman.*" This is one time when we should not follow Jesus' example. I pity the child who calls his mom, "Woman!" And yet, this too, is included in the sign here at Cana.

A sign points, it informs, it identifies. Here at Cana, this sign points to Jesus, informing us of what He will do, and identifying what that means for us.

St. John gives us a clue. Only twice in His Gospel does he mention Jesus' mother. Here at the wedding in Cana, and later as she looks up at her Son from beneath the cross. And both times Jesus calls her "*Woman.*" "*Woman...My hour has not yet come,*" here at Cana. And from the cross, "*Woman, behold your son,*" giving the care of His mother to His disciple John. The sign Jesus does here at Cana, therefore, appears very much to point us to what He will do at Golgotha.

Now when you look at a sign, it can be filled with all kinds of information. Words in big letters, other words in smaller letters, and still others in very tiny print. All of these words on the sign are put there to inform and identify.

This sign, Jesus' miracle at Cana, as with other signs, is filled with much that points, informs, and identifies. And this sign at Cana has big letters, smaller letters, and letters with very tiny print.

In big letters this sign informs us that Jesus is very God of very God. Changing water into wine is no magician's trick. It is an act that God alone can do. In bold letters, this sign here at Cana identifies Jesus as the Son of God. To His disciples, and to us who see the sign, this much is clear.

And then, on this sign are also smaller letters. We need to look a little closer at this sign to see what they tell us. They inform us that no crisis is too little for God. "*They have no wine,*" Mary tells Jesus. This is not a huge deal. It's not as if a wedding guest is having a heart attack. Or that all the guests are sick from food that was not properly prepared. They could drink water. They have plenty of that. No one is going to die here in Cana from the lack of wine. It's a small problem.

And, I think, much like most of the problems we face on a daily basis. We call them crises. And we get all bent out of shape over them. But nearly all the problems we face day in and day out are no worse than running out of wine.

Yet each and every problem, no matter how small, is of concern to your Lord because it is of concern to you. Jesus cares about your problems because He cares about you. And even if...and this is a big "If," even if it appears to us that He does not care and that He will not help.

"*Woman,*" Jesus says here at Cana, "*what does this have to do with Me?*" "How is this problem My concern?" Does our faith shrink at this response? "Is this how Jesus will reply to me when I bring my problems to Him?"

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink," we sing, "Though pressed by every foe; that will not tremble on the brink of any earthly woe."

Mary does not shrink, does she? She turns to the servants and says, "*Do whatever He tells you.*" Jesus will take care of it. She gives this problem to Jesus. Does she know how He will handle it, and even that He will? No. But that is no concern to her. She gives this small crisis to Jesus. It is now in His hands.

Whatever crisis you are facing in your life, big or small, be like Mary. Give it to Jesus. Will He help, and how will He help? That is not your concern. When your problem is in Jesus' hands, it is no longer in your hands. And take note whose hands are marked with nails. Not yours. But His hands are. Does this not prove His care and concern for you?

That was His hour. His hour did not come at Cana. But it did come at Golgotha. The night of His betrayal and arrest, Jesus said: "*Behold, the hour is coming, indeed, it has come.*" That was His finest hour. The hour to which the sign at Cana points. The hour of His suffering and death on the cross.

And now we come to the very tiny printed words on the sign. To the bridegroom, the master of the feast says, "*You have kept the good wine until now.*" Just as wine is called in the Bible: "the blood of grapes," so the good wine is the blood shed for you by Jesus on the cross.

And that, my friends, is the good wine that Jesus has kept for you. No matter what you think of the taste of the Communion wine served from this altar, it is the good wine, for it is the blood of Christ Himself for the forgiveness of your sins.

When the wine in your life runs out, Jesus is here with the good wine for you. And He gives to you this good wine so that the celebration can continue here and forever in heaven. The wedding of your baptism, joining, yes grafting you into Jesus as His Bride, continues here from this altar, because here is the good wine of His blood that cleanses you of all sin.

Even with all the crises in your life, you can celebrate, because no crisis can separate you from Jesus. No sin that you have done can bring your celebration to an end. It is all forgiven. You are all forgiven.

And so, "Come, friends, and share the feast; Here drink the wine supplied By Him who is both guest and host for us, the Crucified." Amen.