

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany – Pr. Faugstad sermon
St. John 2:1-11: “Jesus Starts with the Home.”
January 17/18, 2026 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

In Nomine Iesu

+++

O Lord Christ, who by Your presence and first miracle at Cana of Galilee adorned and beautified the holy estate of matrimony: We beseech You to sanctify the marriage bond in the life of our people, and to bless our homes with Your abiding presence; for the honor and glory of Your name. Amen. (*Parish Prayers*, ed. Frank Colquhoun, p. 46)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)

The sermon text for today is written in the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:

On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with His disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” / And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.” / His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” / Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. / And He said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” / This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him. (ESV)

These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)

In Christ Jesus, who does not reject us for our sins but nourishes and cherishes us as members of His holy body (Eph. 5:29-30), dear fellow redeemed:

We expect that Jesus would perform His first public sign in the heart of Jerusalem, perhaps in the temple, so all the higher-ups would know the Messiah had come. He could have done something magnificent like the transfiguration of His appearance, flying from one place to another, or putting food on everyone's table or money in their pockets. Or His first sign could have been in His hometown of Nazareth, so all His neighbors would realize who He really was.

But Jesus did not choose Nazareth or the Holy City. He chose Cana, a little town in Galilee about nine miles north of Nazareth. And the occasion for His first sign was a wedding. A common Jewish custom for wedding feasts at this time was a seven-day celebration. The fact that the wine ran out does not automatically mean the guests at this wedding drank more than usual. It could mean that more guests had arrived than anticipated.

Running out of wine would have certainly changed the celebratory mood of those who were present. And it would have been an embarrassing way for the bride and groom to begin their life together. The situation concerned Jesus' mother Mary enough that she brought the problem to her Son. *"They have no wine,"* she told Him. Jesus' reply is surprisingly blunt: *"Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."*

We're not sure what Mary wanted Jesus to do. But her message to the servants, *"do whatever He tells you,"* indicates that she thought He might do something. We can't forget how Mary treasured up all the things she heard and saw about her special Son through the years and pondered them in her heart (Luk. 2:19,51). Now that He was a grown man, she was waiting for Him to take the next step, to reveal who He really was, who the angel Gabriel told her He was—the true Son of God (Luk. 1:35). His recent calling of Galilean men to be His disciples certainly had her thinking that something was about to happen.

But Jesus was not going to be forced to act by His mother whom He loved dearly. He told her as a twelve-year-old that the plan was not in her hands, *"Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?"* (Luk. 2:49). And He reminded her of the same thing now, *"what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."* And at this point in the account, Mary, after speaking to the servants, steps aside.

Soon after this, Jesus quietly asked the servants to fill six large stone jars with water. When this was done, He asked them to *"draw some out and take it to the master of the feast."* Could they tell that the water's color had changed? Could they smell the aroma of wine? Did they comprehend what had just happened? Whether it struck them in the moment or later on, these eyewitnesses could only conclude that Jesus had powers unlike anyone else they knew or had heard of. That's certainly the impact this sign had on the disciples. The evangelist John who was almost certainly present at the wedding reported about himself and the other disciples that they *"believed in [Jesus],"* that He was the Son of God incarnate.

So Jesus saved the wedding celebration. He saved the bride and groom from embarrassment. Their joy-filled union was the occasion for His first public sign through which He *"manifested His glory."* Of all the places and ways He could have revealed His divinity, He chose a wedding celebration, the formation of a new home through the marital union of husband and wife.

While it might not be what we expect, a wedding was a fitting place and way for Jesus to start His public work. Marriage is the first building block of society and everything that exists within it—from home to church to state. God instituted marriage before the fall into sin, so He saw that it was *"very good"* even for a man and woman who lacked nothing. Marriage was a gift for them, and it was the means by which God would expand the human race.

Adam and Eve had the first and only perfect marriage. Adam rejoiced that the woman made from his rib was *"bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man"* (Gen. 2:23). The end of Genesis 2 includes this note, *"And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed"* (v. 24). They had a marriage without shame, without any sin. They perfectly loved one another and perfectly served one another.

But then they gave it all up because they wanted to have more. They brought sin into Paradise. Immediately after falling, they played the blame game, pointing their fingers at each other instead of themselves. But God did not destroy them for their sin or take them away from each other. He gave them a promise that would hold them together and give them hope. From the woman would come an Offspring who would crush Satan's head (3:15).

That particular woman was not Eve but the virgin Mary, and that particular Offspring was Jesus the Christ. What Adam and Eve destroyed, Jesus came to restore. He came to rescue the human race, and with it, His beautiful institution of marriage. Marriage can never be in this life what it was before the fall into sin, but it can be more than the world considers it to be—much more.

To teach us about the greatness of marriage, Jesus likens it to His union with the Church of all believers. Ephesians 5 says that as the Church acknowledges Christ as its Head and submits to Him, "*so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands*" (v. 24). And as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, this is how husbands should love their wives (v. 25). When this happens by the grace of God, when neither spouse points fingers and both spouses make sacrifices for each other, then we catch a glimpse of the blessed union of Christ with His Church.

Sometimes a self-sacrificing love can be found in marriages between unbelievers. But more often the view of marriage in the world today is that it exists for my personal fulfillment, and if I am not happy, if my needs are not being met the way I want them to be, then I am going to walk. And then there is the growing number of couples who think marriage is "nothing but a piece of paper," a formality, which is "not nearly as important as a shared expression of love for one another." The devil attacks the best gifts of God, and that's what he is doing to marriage today.

It isn't just unbelievers who are affected by his lies and temptations. Satan especially works against marriages of Christians, and he has done damage among us too. He tempts us to selfishness, unkindness, jealousy, manipulation, hurtful words, and hurtful actions. He tempts us to look outside of our marriage to get what we want. He tempts us to think that happiness should be the primary concern in our marriage instead of faithfulness and sacrificial love.

But Jesus is active in our marriages too. Despite our sins against Him, He has not turned His back on us. We might get frustrated with each other, but He does not get frustrated with us. He loves us perfectly. As ugly as we know we look in our sin, He declares His bride the Church to be "*without spot or wrinkle or any such thing... holy and without blemish*" (Eph. 5:27). This is because He cleansed us in Holy Baptism "*by the washing of water with the word*" (v. 26). He joined us to Him. He paid for our sins. He covers us in His righteousness. He keeps no record of our wrongs.

This is sacrificial love. We sinned against Him, but He took the punishment in our place. We were unfaithful to Him, but He willingly carried our guilt to the cross. We deserved eternal death, but He died to win us eternal life. Your sins against your neighbor, including your spouse, are sins against Him—and He forgives you. He forgives you, which moves you to share that forgiveness with others. Ephesians 4:32 says, "*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*"

The first sin happened because of a breakdown of marriage. The first sign that God had taken on flesh to bring salvation to the world took place at a marriage celebration. Marriage was not

perpetually cursed by Adam and Eve, so that it should be avoided at all costs. Marriage is eternally blessed by God, so we should embrace it and give thanks for it as a great gift. Whether or not you are married today, you came from a marriage. You had a father and a mother. You know what a gift a healthy marriage is. You know how important marriage is for the home, the church, and the state. It is the human foundation on which everything else rests.

And that's why Jesus is particularly interested in the home. He gives husband and wife to care for, help, and encourage one another. He gives children through their union, so that children have stability, so they are provided for, and so they receive training in the saving Word of God. He gathers the family around His Word, so we set our hope on His promises and grow in love for God and one another. Where His Word is, Jesus is present. He says, *"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them"* (Mat. 18:20).

Jesus is present in holiness and power turning sorrows into joys, pain into pleasure, hardship into contentment. Whatever is brought into our homes because of sin, He transforms by His grace like the way He turned water into wine. Keeping His Word at the center of our home and our life together is how we know our family will be blessed, even if the future does not go the way we plan or expect. Jesus is with us drawing us closer to Him and to one another and giving us hope—hope in this life and hope for the eternal life to come.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

+ + +