

Sermon for Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026

John 2:1-11

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to you Oh Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Most of us are familiar with the story of the wedding at Cana. Today I am going to focus on three of the characters from that story: Mary the mother of Jesus, the servants working at the wedding and then Jesus.

Let's tackle this passage first by thinking about it from Mary's perspective. Mary, the mother of Jesus, becomes aware that the wedding guests have drunk all of the wine. She reports this situation to Jesus. She doesn't insist or command him to do anything. In her own way she follows a verse from psalm 5. The third verse of the psalm goes like this, "In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation." (Repeat) "In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."

Emulating the psalmist Mary reports to Jesus that the wedding party has run out of wine and then trusts that he "will do something." She doesn't know what he will do; but that doesn't seem to matter. She waits in expectation. There's a simple faith demonstrated in her words to the servants: do whatever he tells you.

One lesson to be gleaned from this Scripture is that we can be like Mary. We can recognize a need and name it before God. We can simply put it out there and then wait in expectation. In faith we can trust that God will act. I emphasize again that Mary didn't tell Jesus what to do. She simply trusts that he will take action. It's the same for us. We should name the need before God and then trust that God will take action. (*I suspect that this statement brings up questions, but let me continue with my sermon to see if your questions are answered.*)

Let's consider next the servants that were working at this wedding. They were instructed by Mary to "do whatever he tells you." Jesus told them to fill the jars with water and they obeyed his directive. I dare say that nothing would have happened if the servants hadn't filled the jars. Now I'm not saying Jesus wasn't capable of the miracle—even without water in the jars, but it seems there was a

necessary human component. There would have been no miracle/no sign displaying Jesus' power as God's Son without action on the part of the servants. I would add that the reading tells us that the servants knew where the "good wine" came from. The servants (and the disciples) were the only witnesses to the miracle.

What lesson can we learn from the example of the servants? There may be times when we have to act; times when we have to fill the water jars so that the conditions are established for God to act. What will our reward be? We will be in a position to see God's miracles: in a position to see God at work in the world. Now I won't claim to have witnessed a miracle of this caliber but I have definitely seen God at work in the world and it is always amazing. It feeds one's faith. So, if you are called to fill the water jars, even if it seems like a lot of work and for no good reason, DO IT. Your actions are a necessary component for God to work in the world.

Time to move to the third character in this reading: Jesus. In the second chapter of John's gospel we begin hearing stories of miracles performed by Jesus. This gospel never calls them miracles, it calls them signs. The changing of water into wine at Cana is the first of the seven signs described in this gospel. We will talk about several of the other signs (although not all) in the next few weeks.

One way to think about this miracle (or sign) is that it points to Jesus as creator. Back in September we heard a creation story from Genesis reminding us that God is the creator of all that exists. God used God's words to create the heavens and the earth and all that exists in the universe. In the same way, this gospel opened with the words of the prologue proclaiming that--in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Jesus is the incarnate word of God and existed at the start of creation. Jesus as creator has the power to create wine out of water.

A second way to think about this miracle (or sign) is that it points to abundance. God's abundant grace. Someone did the math and determined that those six jars contained the equivalent of 1000 bottles of wine, for heaven's sake! Now that's abundance folks! To be honest, it was likely way more wine than was needed by this point in the wedding celebration. Jesus could have only changed one of those big jars into wine: it likely would have been enough to satisfy the need. But that's not how Jesus chose to fulfill the need.

Jesus chose to demonstrate God's grace-filled abundance through this miracle.

And that's grace my friends. Grace is God's extravagant and unexplainable love for all of creation. And of course God's grace is displayed most effectively when we consider God incarnated here on earth as Jesus. God incarnate, Jesus, was God's grace-filled action taken to demonstrate the depth of God's love, the magnitude of God's grace here on earth.

Grace is almost beyond our comprehension. It defies explanation. God's grace overflows like 6 big jars of wine. God's grace is unmatched and God's grace didn't just benefit that wedding couple 2000 years ago; God's generosity comes to each of us. Often God's grace is quite unexpected and at first we may have trouble recognizing it. But when we pause and consider the possibilities we discover that God's grace abounds in our lives. We, as servants of the most high God, as servants of Jesus, will be allowed to see the miracles of water turned into wine along with all of the other miracles that God performs every day. (*Pause*)

This has been a difficult week in our state. People are so filled with anger, and frustration, and fear at the current crises that it's hard to imagine God at work.

My friends, right now, there are families that are afraid to leave their homes to go to work. There are families that are afraid to send their children to school. There are families that are afraid to leave their homes to get groceries. The RW food shelf reported to me that their normal daily number of clients is about 60. On Thursday, it was 30. People were afraid to go to the food shelf.

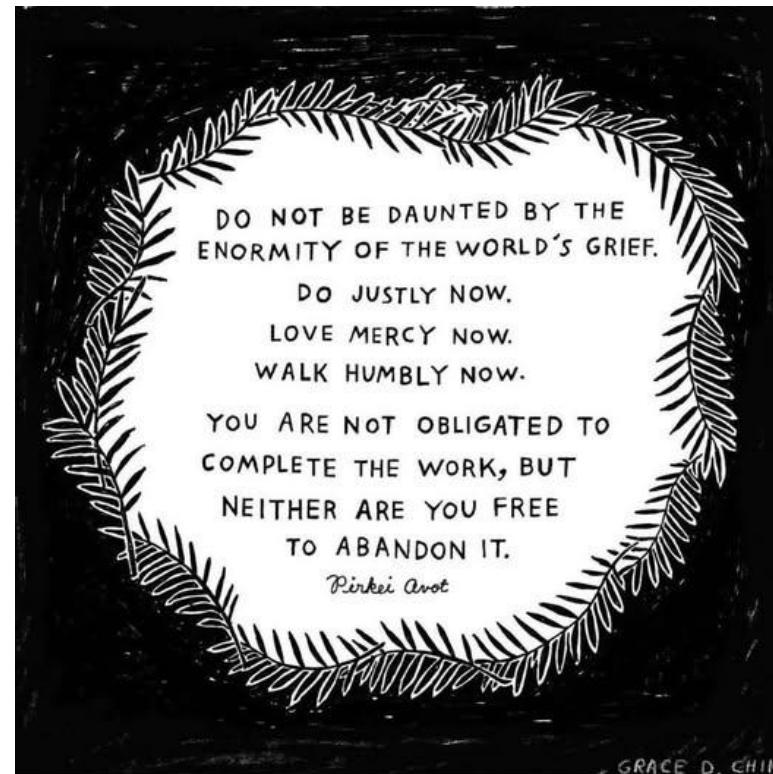
Yet, I am also aware that there are people organizing to make grocery store runs and bring food and household supplies to these frightened families. There are drivers volunteering to take kids to school and bring them home again. Those folks are the servants filling the water jars so that God's abundant grace might be on display. God is at work through the actions of these people.

We are the servants filling the water jars. We are God's hands doing what we can to help our neighbors in need. All we need to do is obey the directive from Mary: do whatever he tells you.

Listen carefully for the stirring of the Spirit of God within you. The servants were asked to simply "do their job" and fill the water jars. They wouldn't have been working the wedding if they weren't able to do the job. The same will be true for you. God will not ask you

to take an action that is beyond your ability. God knows each of us and God loves us enough to ask only what we are capable of completing.

I close with the following words from the Pirkei Avot: a compilation of the Jewish theological and ethical teachings and maxims from Rabbinic Jewish tradition.



Go in peace my friends and be prepared to fill the water jars of the world to overflowing. Amen.