

Let Jesus Know Pastor Morgan Murray West Valley Presbyterian Church

John 2:1-11 NRSV

2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹ This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

Opening illustration:

Would I really let my server choose what I have for dinner!?

I was really caught off guard when Ole Hallesby, an author who wrote a wonderful little book on prayer originally published in 1931, told me that this is story is about prayer.

"They have no more wine."

Does that sound like a prayer to you? It didn't sound like one to me.... At first. But here, at the beginning of John's gospel, Mary teaches us how simple intercessory prayer can be. Prayer is simply letting Jesus know what is going on!

How do we know that this is a prayer, and not something else?

First, **Mary is moved by compassion**. Mary is telling Jesus about the problem because she is sensitive to the needs of the gathering, and perhaps sensitive to the possibility of embarrassment for the groom and his family.

Also, we see that **Mary is motivated to action**. When she says to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you," she is expressing absolute confidence in Jesus. She doesn't micromanage. She

doesn't try to come up with a solution and ask Jesus to make it happen. She has complete trust that Jesus will know the right thing to do, and the right way to do it. She places the matter in his capable hands, and helps others do the same.

Compassion and action are the stuff of real prayer – not fretting, or complaining, or gossiping. I love the fact that with Mary there is no commentary about the bridegroom being a poor host or about the attendees drinking too much. She isn't making a judgment. She isn't diagnosing the problem. And she isn't fretting – not at all.

Mary is simply letting the Lord know what is going on, and trusting the Lord to take it from there.

This is what faith-filled prayer looks like! I need to pray more like Mary!

When we pray this way, we setting things up for the Lord to truly answer the prayer. The way Jesus answers prayer is always better, and greater, than we can imagine.

How is it better? It's the best wine! It's not simply more of the same. What Jesus provides is of far better quality than we could ever bring about by our best efforts. God's answers to our prayers are never consolation prizes. They meet our needs in ways that bring more satisfaction and far greater joy than we might imagine.

How is it greater? It's not just wine, it's a sign! The miracle doesn't just meet the immediate need, but it is a sign of God-generosity and Kingdom-celebration. The fact that transformation happens inside clay jars meant for religious purification is intended to point to the way Jesus is going to transform all our religious sensibilities. John doesn't end the story with, "And they all had a really great time!" – though they most certainly did. He ends with, "[Jesus] thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him." Mary's faith-filled intercession open the door to Jesus being glorified and others placing their trust in him.

As Ole Hallesby puts it:

"To pray is nothing more involved than to let Jesus into our needs. To pray is to give Jesus permission to employ His powers in the alleviation of our distress. To pray is to let Jesus glorify His name in the midst of our needs."

- O. Hallesby, *Prayer*

This is the first miracle Jesus does in John's gospel, and it comes in direct response to the first intercessory request someone makes to him. Our prayers can be the gateway to real miracles, both large and small.

Let Jesus into your needs, and the needs of others.
Let Jesus employ his powers.
Let Jesus glorify his name in the midst of our needs.

Our invitation today:

Be like Mary. Let Jesus know!

Amen.