

Do you have a favourite wine? Mine's currently a blend by bodacious, red and aged in a whiskey barrel. It sounds fancy. It's pretty cheap, but I like it. Maybe you like Apothic or bearflag, Jackson-Triggs. Or maybe you've got more expensive tastes, some of you probably like wines I've never heard of because I check the price tags first before looking. Some people have a preference for types of grapes but don't really care about the brand and quality; as long as it's a merlot, they'll take a glass. Others couldn't care at all what type of wine it is. It's all gross. (If that's you, you might want to go grab a coffee, or water, or whatever whets your whistle because I don't know that you're going to get much out of today's sermon.)

Just kidding. Whether Jesus produced a wine that was right up your alley or one you'd never be caught dead drinking, what Jesus produces is gonna hit your sweet spot.

Jesus shows up, just another down to earth guy, enjoying the party with His community. And this picture of Jesus is beautiful; in our text He affirms marriage once again—let the reader know that when we say again, it's because He has already affirmed it in the creation of Adam and Eve, and in every other wedding that He has blessed as a person of the Triune God in all of history before His incarnation. Today He just blesses it by being present in His flesh and blood. And He affirms wine, and alcohol as a whole once again—prior to His incarnation the Triune God has included wine in the beautiful visions of paradise. Unending wine and sweet honey and milk flowing freely are often used to describe paradise, God's kingdom restored. So in our text today we see a nice continuity of Christ—who He was before the incarnation is who He is after the incarnation, only now He has hands that look kind of like yours, hair that needs to be washed like yours, a stomach that needs to be fed like yours.

And by attending the average Joe and Jane's wedding—they aren't even named in our text, so they must not be that important—He shows that He cares about the every day going-ons of those in His creation, those whom He dwelt among.

This is a pretty cool picture of God made flesh that gets even cooler when we know what happens next. He saves the party; He stops it from ending early, which would bring shame to the bride and groom and their families, and surely this would put a damper on the mood of everyone attending. "The wine ran out?" "Yeah, so I think I'm going to head out." "Wanna go catch the late show? I'll pay for the popcorn." What was supposed to be an extended event, one that might last as long as a week, would have come to a grinding halt if Jesus hadn't stepped in and saved the day. Jesus

acts just like we, and every person in history, hopes that God would act. Mary says a little prayer, the servants do a little ritual, and then everything turns out.

Wouldn't it be excellent if this is always how things happened? If we always prayed for a safe trip we'd never get into an accident? Or if we looked to the heavens every morning and night and prayed that God would take care of our health, our family and friends, and everyone around the world and then that just, happened?

I think this is what Jesus was a little worried about when he was hesitant to do anything. "It's not my hour, mom. What do you want me to do?" And yet because He does care about everyday people in their everyday situations and their everyday problems, He acts, but we must heed His hesitancy and we must follow where the text points us.

At the very beginning John gives us a clue as to what this is all about. This takes place on the third day. It's not *the* third day event, but we are meant to think about the third day; it sets the tone for the whole text. And at the end of the text John lets us know that this is the first sign Jesus did—sign is John's term for miracle, but it tells us something very particular; it tells us to look beyond the immediate event. What is it pointing to?

Well, it points us to the hour of Christ, which, He tells us, this event is not. But His hour comes three years later, or 10 chapters later, depending on how you measure it. His hour comes when His betrayer approaches, when His passion weekend takes place, when His glorification is about to occur in the midst of a major struggle in which according to the human eye, the human logic, Jesus loses. He doesn't pull out all the stops to do something great which causes His disciples believe again in awe. He doesn't repeat the cool trick of water to wine to get His enemies on His side. He doesn't show His Godly power we see in today's reading by just pulling out the nails and hopping down from the cross. He just suffers. He breathes His last. He dies.

But how is a wedding in Cana and a death on Golgotha connected? How does the first point to the second? It happened on the third day, when Jesus rose from the dead, against all odds and defying all logic. And when He rose from the dead, He proved that He was the Messiah, come from heaven clothed in our flesh and blood, and all the Old testament prophecies that associate the promised land with wine come about when God's people had been saved and are brought to the wedding feast on mount Zion.

So even more than He cares about weddings, even more than He approves the appropriate use of alcohol, He cares about bringing about a wedding that will last longer, bring more joy, and have wine that will satisfy perfectly unto

eternity. He is here to solve more complex problems than running out of wine, or whatever you might run out of on a day to day basis—friendship, clothing, money, meaning—He is here to solve the sin and death problem, so that one day all your problems you deal with daily will cease to exist. So on the third day, after His hour has come and gone, after His sign to end all signs is accomplished, He brings you into His eternal wedding that starts now and ends never.

And today, you and I receive a foretaste of the wedding feast which will have no end. In the body and blood of Christ we receive a greater miracle than simple changing water into wine. In the Lord's Supper this day, we receive by faith His holy body and blood which puts an end to death even as it circles around us. It forgives us our sins even as we commit them mere moments prior and afterwards. It keeps us in the community of the one, holy catholic and apostolic church, unified perfectly by His flesh and blood even as contentions exist between the pews here today.

So standing on the other side of His hour, looking back, having received faith in our baptism and by the preaching of His Word, having tasted of what will be our eternal existence, having heard of this very hour which He endured for you, it becomes a lens by which we view our world and endure our days. His hour is completed, and so we can rejoice.

If it's our wedding day and things seem to be going wrong (as they are wont to do), maybe the wine ran out or the families are fighting, we know that there is a feast that supersedes this and in fact makes even rough moment fantastic.

If you're at a funeral, tears streaming down your face and you find a gaping hole left in your chest, by faith you rejoice in the eternal wedding feast which we hope your loved one is now partaking in.

If your child is screaming at you and you don't know how to fix it, know that the Christ who died and rose is with you. He did that for you and me and therefore we can endure this moment whatever that looks like.

In all these moments, pray. Pray that God would work, because He has proven time and time again that He cares for you even in the midst of the everyday struggles and joys. Pray that He would fix your problem, either by the hands of a liquor delivery service or by the process of time or by the help of a child psychologist or a loving teacher, or even by a miraculous working. Pray in these moments trusting that God hears and He cares. And whether or not He decides to do something, He is with you, and His peace, hope, joy, and love are here for you in Christ now, even amidst the worst chaos.

And even if everything seems to be great, if Becky and I are having a glass of wine while we work on a puzzle and listen to a podcast, I can rejoice that the marriage I am in is pleasing to the LORD because He loves marriage and has redeemed us, and this wine is a wonderful foretaste of the joy that is coming. But I know that as good as that Friday night is, a greater day, the revelation of the final third day wedding when the hills will flow with wine is on its way and it is mine, *because Christ has done it for me. And Christ has done it for you, opening up the doors to the wedding that will know no conflict and have no end. This is yours, even today.*

Amen