

SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST

JOHN 2: 1-11

The Jews attached great importance to the high moments of life. Thus a wedding was not just a brief ceremony, but an experience shared by the entire community. The typical wedding feast could last up to seven days. That sounds strange to our modern way of thinking, but this offered a bright interlude in an otherwise dreary existence. The ceremony would begin on Tuesday at midnight. After the wedding, the father of the bride would take his daughter to every house so that everyone might congratulate her. It was a community experience. Weddings were a time of joy.

Years ago when Johnny Carson was the host of The Tonight Show he interviewed an eight-year-old boy. The young man was asked to appear because he had rescued two friends in a coal mine outside his hometown in West Virginia. As Johnny questioned the boy, it became apparent to him and the audience that the young man was a Christian. So Johnny asked him if he attended Sunday school. When the boy said he did Johnny inquired, "What are you learning in Sunday school?" "Last week," came his reply, "our lesson was about when Jesus went to a wedding and turned water into wine." The audience roared, but Johnny tried to keep a straight face. Then he said, "And what did you learn from that story?" The boy squirmed in his chair. It was apparent he hadn't thought about this. But then he lifted up his face and said, "If you're going to have a wedding, make sure you invite Jesus!" The little boy was on to something. Weddings are time of Joy.

At the wedding, which Jesus attended in Cana of Galilee, there was great joy, but a problem developed. There was a shortage of wine. Not only was that a social embarrassment, but it was also a symbol. For a wedding to run out of wine was an omen that there was little chance of this particular marriage reaching its full potential, maybe joy was not meant for this couple.

So Mary approaches Jesus and asks him to do something. His response? "Why do you involve me woman?" Sounds harsh, so unlike him, and it has long puzzled biblical scholars. But you have to look at this scene in its historical context. Jesus, at this moment, had not performed a single miracle. He was thirty years old, and he had just gathered together his disciples. He knows that if he performs a miracle, a clock will start ticking and it will not stop until he gets to Calvary.

Even so, Jesus makes his move and gives his first public sign that he is different; he transforms water into wine. I consider it divine good fortune that we have a scripture lesson so early in the year which encourages us to ponder a miracle. You and I need to become more sensitive to the possibility of miracles. Such a sensitivity will help us recognize present miracles, which we either do not see or which we take for granted; and it will prepare us to receive still more miracles.

May we be open to what God is doing all arounds us so that we might see and possible participate in miracles for the glory of God's kingdom.

God bless,
Pastor Barbara