

# “The Best Wine”

*The Rev. S. Shane Nanney – January 16, 2022*

*1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and John 2:1-11*

During the wedding rehearsal, the groom pulled the pastor aside and made him an offer:

He said "Look, I'll give you \$100 if you'll change the wedding vows. When you get to the part where I'm to promise to 'love, honor and obey,' I'd appreciate it if you'd just leave that part out." He gave him a \$100 bill and walked away.

The day of the wedding, the bride and groom were to that part of the ceremony where the vows are exchanged. When it came time for the groom's vows, the pastor looked the young man and said, **"Will you promise to bow down before her, obey her every command and wish; serve her breakfast in bed every morning of your life; and swear eternally before God and your lovely wife that you will not ever even look at another woman, as long as you both shall live?"**

The groom gulped and looked around, and said in a tiny voice, "Yes." Then he leaned in and asked "What happened? I thought we had a deal!"

So, the pastor gave him his \$100 back and told him that the bride had made a better offer.

Weddings are fun, they are times of celebration. They are times when we rejoice. We enjoy the company of those we love, and we experience a new bond of unity and commitment between two people.

But anybody that has planned a wedding knows about all the work involved. We want everything to go just right. The bride spends the whole day getting ready; the groom spends just 10 minutes. The meal is set. The rehearsal has helped everyone know exactly where to stand. The cake is in the right place. And through all the practices, through all the preparation, through all the planning, most weddings will have one glitch, one or two things that are not perfect.

We work so hard to make our wedding day a very special time. Yet life rarely works as smoothly or goes as well as we want it to.

Over the years of my ministry, I've seen a lot of mistakes at weddings. I've seen brides giggle uncontrollably. The groom shows up late, or the groom shows up with alcohol on his breath. I have seen many trips and falls.

When these kinds of disasters happen, we are a little embarrassed, but we usually just laugh a bit and move on - because the really important part of a wedding - the love and the promise that make the covenant - is in the hearts of the bride and groom. Still, we want this day to be so special.

Jesus' first miracle happened because Jesus' mother Mary was concerned about a large potential embarrassment at a wedding. The wine had run out.

What Jesus did show was his compassion for people. He cares about our embarrassing shortcomings, and he wants to help us find the joy in our lives.

In the midst of this great celebration, they ran out of wine!!! Not just the good wine . . . but ALL the wine!!!! It was a little like Burger King running out of hamburgers. Mary realizes the seriousness of the issue. You can hear it in her words . . . "THEY HAVE NO WINE."

This statement by Mary goes beyond liquid refreshment at a wedding. The wine is a symbol for joy. It is symbolic of our lives. It is a scary thing when the "wine runs out." That is simply the way life works. There are times we run out of joy.

But this miracle teaches us that when the wine runs out, Jesus can turn the water into wine.

How is your Joy? Some of you are so full of Joy that you are, like the psalm says, letting your cup overflow. Your Joy is plentiful, and you have more than enough to share. But others have this dry, empty feeling. And you need to reconnect with Jesus so that he can fill up your cup with JOY.

Sometimes we forget that joy comes from the Lord. And we go empty without him. But the Bible reminds us that the Joy of the Lord is our strength. Do you believe that? Because if you do, that means that Joy doesn't come from anywhere else. I may be married to a great person . . . but my Joy comes from God. Your team may be going to the Superbowl . . . but your Joy comes from God. My kids may be geniuses . . . but my Joy comes from God.

And when things are not well, we can still say “I just got laid off, but God is going to fill my cup. My kids are sick, but God is pouring out his blessings. My marriage is rough, but God is full of blessings, and I will find a way to rejoice in Him.”

If we look at the first miracle of Jesus, we see this truth . . . Jesus is not just the giver of joy . . . he is the giver of “**abundant**” joy. He not only met their immediate need, but he gave an abundance.

Jesus did not just make some ordinary wine. The wine that he produced was better than that with which they had started the celebration. Jesus didn’t just doctor the water so that it tasted like wine . . . the water in those pots was transformed into the finest wine the people had ever tasted. But we need to focus not on the stone pots or even the wine . . . we need to focus on the transformation. Jesus is about transformation.

He turned water into wine! And he turns grim faces into relieved smiles; whimpers of fear into songs of hope; deserts into gardens, sorrow into joy. He gives beauty for ashes, strength for fear, gladness for mourning, and peace for despair. He turns sin into grace and death into life.

Jesus is all about transforming. Changing people—that’s what it’s all about. This story teaches us that . . . Jesus offers an abundance of new wine, abundance of grace, and an abundance of love.

Sometimes it’s hard for us to understand God not only meeting our needs but providing for us an abundance. But that’s the story of grace. There is no measure to grace. There will always be enough of it to meet our needs. That’s the story of God’s love.

There is nothing that you can do that will cause God to diminish his love for you and he wants to pour out his new wine on you in abundance.

What do you do when the wine runs out? Mary showed us by example. She told the servants that if they would just do what Jesus commanded, they would see a miracle.

Jesus is waiting to see if you know what to do when your wine runs out? He is always willing to fill you with a great abundance of His love. Amen.