



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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January 20, 2013

Epiphany 2

Sermon Text: [John 2:1-11](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Exodus 7:14-24](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 133-134](#)

Second Lesson: [Ephesians 3:14-21](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 2:1-11](#)

Messiah is Revealed By His Power

Power to change water

Power to change hearts

Grace and mercy are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

When I was growing up and it was early in my grade school years, my dad spent a lot of time doing side jobs and different things on the weekend. One of the things that he often did, people would hire him to rewire houses. I got to go with him. Of course I didn't get to learn anything about it. I was too young yet. I got to do all the grunt work, like "Get me that. Get this." That kind of stuff. Pull the wire. Do this. Do that. But I didn't really learn a lot about it. So I don't know all the names for all the different stuff. But I remember when we would get started. You'd turn the power off in the house. So the power should all be off, right? But you'd never just assume that the power was off, right? You would go to the outlet because an outlet that has power and an outlet that doesn't have power don't look any different. They look exactly the same. So he'd get out that whatchamacallit (I don't know the name), and he'd test it to see if there was any power there before we got started as we went around to the different places. It looks the same, but you'd want to find out if there was power there with that thing and not because you grabbed the wire.

If you looked at Jesus, if you were one of the wedding crashers, one of the people there at that wedding in Cana, he wouldn't have looked any different than anyone else. He wouldn't have looked like this great source of supernatural power, would he? Yet we see how during the season of Epiphany, which means to reveal, Jesus reveals himself as the promised Messiah, the Anointed One, sometimes by the power that he exhibits. He shows them that he is the fulfillment of all prophecy. It says the blind would see, the lame would walk, the deaf would hear, all those kind of things. He uses his power to reveal that he was the One that was promised. That's what we see happen here at Cana, of all places.

At Cana in Galilee. We see the Messiah is revealed by his power as he changes water into wine, but then don't miss the last paragraph of what I read to you a little bit ago. His power is also revealed, not just by changing water, but by changing us. By changing hearts, which is much more important for you and me. It's what Paul talked about in our Second Lesson. It's also what we see in our Gospel.

The start of what I read to you from John 2 says “On the third day.” So the natural question is, the third day after what? Last week we read and talked about the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. He had his baptism in the Jordan River. After his baptism in the Jordan River, he spent 40 days in the wilderness without eating, being tempted by Satan. Then he came back and he was in the northern area there. He had called some people to be his disciples. We know of five for sure by this time as they go to Cana. I think it was Peter on the first day. The next day it was someone else. It says, “On the third day,” so it’s the third day after he had started calling disciples to follow him, I’m assuming from John 1 where you read it.

They went to this wedding they had been invited to. Wedding celebrations there were a lot different. No broasted chicken involved. No beef tips. None of that kind of stuff. It wasn’t just an evening. It was a week long celebration. The town would get together. The neighboring towns too. They grew up in Nazareth, which was a little bit away from Cana, but they traveled over to Cana to celebrate with this couple their life together now as husband and wife. As part of that celebration, I suppose some is the same as today, a lot of eating, a lot of drinking, a lot of rejoicing, a lot of celebrating together, but we are told that in this time that they spend together, they ran out of wine. For whatever reason, we aren’t told why, Mary comes to Jesus and tells him about it. It kind of sounds like it might just be an offhand remark. “Hey, Jesus, did you hear? They’re out of wine.” But Jesus doesn’t take it as such, does he? His answer to Mary tells you it’s a little bit different. His answer to Mary is kind of surprising, isn’t it? “Woman, why do you involve me?” Okay, when is the last time you called your mom “woman”? Raise your hand. You kids that are here, I would not advise it anytime today. It’s not how we usually talk, right? Mom, something like that, right? But “woman, why do you involve me”? It sounds like fingernails on a chalkboard a little bit, doesn’t it? It just doesn’t sound quite right to us.

The one thing we know is it’s not disrespect. It’s not anything like that because Jesus is the sinless Son of God and we know from Scripture he never sinned, so this statement “Woman, why do you involve me” is not disrespect. Maybe it’s indicating to us now that as Jesus has begun his public ministry, starting with his baptism and now what he’s doing, that the relationship between he and Mary is a little bit different. He still loves her. He still honors her. But when he says “woman” and he’s starting to talk about doing what he was here to do, revealing himself as the Messiah and carrying out his ministry, maybe it’s a reminder that she’s just like everyone else. She’s a sinner that needs him to be perfect in her place just as much as you and I do. The relationship now is shifting a little bit. He tells her “My time has not yet come.” It seems that Jesus was saying she was thinking “It’s time for you to start doing some stuff and showing people who you are.”

Mary tells the servants “Do whatever he tells you,” which kind of had to seem like an odd request. But they are servants, so they say okay. Then Jesus gives them what had to sound like kind of a strange command. “Those six jars over there, 120-130 lbs. of water in each jar” (a lot of water), “go fill them up.” These were jars that would often be around at various places because the Jews had all kinds of regulations for

ceremonial purification through water, applying water to say you are now ceremonially clean. It's not for washing to get the germs off like we talk about. They had all kinds of regulations. Tons of them that they had drawn up on when you were supposed to use water, which explains why they'd have such big jugs there and so many of them for ceremonial washing. These aren't the wine vats. These are the water jars. Jesus tells them "Fill them up with water." That's natural. That's normal. That's what they usually do.

Then the next request... "Take some out and go take it to the master of the banquet." Why, is he thirsty? What am I taking this there for? It seems like they would have thought that's kind of an odd command. So they take it to him. I wonder as they are going do they notice it doesn't look like water anymore? We aren't told any of that stuff. I kind of wonder about that. But when they get there, the guy drinks it, and it's wine. Water had changed into wine.

Some people who want to explain away all the miraculous in the Bible say, "Well, there were some dregs from wine in the bottom of this, so when they poured it in..." I don't know if they thought it was Kool-Aid wine or something and it just became wine from what was in the bottom, but that's obviously not what those jars were for. This is outside the course of nature. This is something that's supernatural, beyond nature. Jesus in some way, shape or form took that water and changed it into wine by his almighty power.

Notice how he does it. He does it in a way so the master of the banquet doesn't know. People there don't know. The only people that really know are the disciples that are with him and the servants that did it. Nobody else knows. If this is going to be your first miracle, wouldn't you want to do something on Main Street? Not in Podunk Cana. Shouldn't it have been a parting of the Red Sea or something miraculous that would just grab everyone's attention? They are walking along. It's no longer water. Now it's wine. They give it to someone. That just seems kind of goofy. If you and I are going to plan Jesus' ministry, we wouldn't have come up with this, would we?

But when Jesus said, "My time has not yet come," it kind of tells us this miracle was not for the whole world to see so that everyone all of a sudden would start following him and all these things like happened later, looking for magic shows like Herod and others did. This was more for the people he had just called to be his followers, so they could see who it was they were following. These are the guys that are going to learn from him. These are the guys that see this and they think, "This is the Messiah. This is the Christ." They don't know everything that means yet, but this demonstration of his power was there for those people.

Believing the supernatural is hard for us. Thomas Jefferson is on your nickel. If you have a nickel in your pocket, you have a picture of Thomas Jefferson. Did you know Thomas Jefferson published his own edition of the Bible? Colonial America. Did you

know that? His Bible is a little different than yours and mine. He went through and took out any reference to anything supernatural because he didn't believe it could happen. He didn't believe these things.

What would be gone in his Bible? The wedding at Cana, the water into wine is gone. Also the resurrection of Jesus would be gone, because he didn't believe people came back from the dead.

It's hard for us to believe the supernatural, isn't it? It's hard for us to believe that God is going to use power in ways that go beyond our understanding because we think our understanding is often everything. Then even when we do believe that Jesus can do anything, that God can do anything, Satan still creeps into our mind and says "God, if you're all powerful, why aren't you using your power this way or that way or the way I want or the way I think you should?" So Satan makes it hard for us to even believe it will happen. Then when we do believe, he twists that around also and says "Well God, if you're so powerful, why would you let children have cancer? Why would you let bad things happen?" You've heard those kinds of things, haven't you? You probably struggled with them yourself.

God's power is not there to make everything in this world better. His power is not here to relieve all the suffering in our lives. It's not here to take away all the effects of sin. He tells us those things stay in our life because now we see through a glass darkly because he wants us to set our hearts and our thoughts and our minds on our eternal home, not just this earthly home. You know that's a struggle for you and me. We want to think about the here and now and how things should be better. We don't always live as though we are just on a long trip until God calls us back to our true home, which is heaven.

God hasn't promised to use his power to make this life better. He has told us he uses his power so that his glory may be revealed and so that you and I put our trust in him and not in our own understanding. Our understanding is clouded. Our understanding is screwed up. We are sinners. But we can trust God has the power. We can trust God will use the power in the best possible way. Why can we trust that? Because of that last little paragraph.

It says that when Jesus revealed his power, he did it so that his disciples would see his glory and trust that he is the Messiah. It takes God's power to lead you and me to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. It takes God's power to lead you and me to believe that all of our sins are forgiven because Jesus lived and died in our place. That's what Paul was talking about in that Second Lesson. See how often he talked about power? "I pray that you may have power to understand how wide and how deep and all those things are that God's love is. I pray that you may have God's power so that you can understand the things that are not able to be understood, like how deep God's love is for you." You and I will mess it up.

Confirmation class, I take 7th and 8th graders to confirmation. One of the things I tell them all the time is we can't earn heaven. I stress that over and over. You've heard that if you've been through my confirmation class. Yet, I don't know how many times when there is a multiple choice, "We do this to show our love for God and earn heaven," they are still marking it. There's a part of us that naturally thinks we have to do something.

There's no such thing as a free lunch. That's drilled into our heads over and over. If it's worthwhile, it takes work. So we sometimes want to apply that to salvation. I talk to people that are close to death at times. "Are you ready to meet your Lord?" "I think so Pastor. I've always tried to do my best." It's not what you do. It's what Jesus did for you. It takes God's power to change our hearts to believe it's all about Jesus and what he has done for us. It's not about ourselves. That's what his power does. It leads us to see.

God doesn't care who you are or what you've done, he's taken away every last one of your sins. God's Spirit has put faith in your hearts through the Word and through the Sacraments, through Baptism, through the preaching of the Word, through the Lord's Supper. God's Spirit gives you faith and strengthens you in that faith. That's where the power is.

So in a sense, God has taken us to this spiritual outlet. We put in those two things and we've seen this is where the power is for our Christian life. It's in Baptism. It's in the Word. And it's in the Lord's Supper. When you and I spend time with it, we aren't going to get shocked. We aren't going to be electrocuted. We are going to be strengthened. If we know that's where God's power is for our daily life, isn't that where we want to be? Wouldn't we just want to be immersed in that so that God's love flows over us so that God's understanding, God's way of looking at things becomes our way of looking at things, because we just aren't that bright. The more we spend with God's power, the more he reveals it to us through Word and Sacrament, the more our hearts are changed so that we are more Christlike, and the sinful nature grows less and less powerful in our lives.

It's the most glorious thing in the world to lay your head on the pillow at night and know that no matter what happens, no matter what you might face, you have a God that loves you and has forgiven you and will be with you through whatever the next night or the next day brings. That's what God has revealed to us. That's the truth we live in. Amen.