

14 January 2009  
Epiphany 1 Midweek

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church  
Greenspring Village, Springfield, VA

Jesu Juva

“A Good Way to Begin”

Text: John 2:1-11; Isaiah 62:1-5

It would have been an embarrassment. It would have been a disappointment. It would have killed the party. But to run out of wine during a wedding feast would not have been the end of the world. We might have expected Jesus to do a greater or more significant thing for His first miracle. Changing water in wine seems rather mundane when compared to opening the eyes of the blind, giving hearing to the deaf, enabling paralyzed men to walk again, and raising the dead. So why *this* for an inaugural miracle?

Well, perhaps we can take a cue from our incoming president to help us understand, for there is much ado about what he is going to do *first*; what his first acts as president will be; what he will accomplish in his first 100 days in office. These beginnings (it is said) will set the tone and direction of his administration, and signal what it is he has in mind to do; what is important to him; what his priorities are.

So while there are many great and wondrous miracles Jesus *could* have done, He chooses to change water into wine at a wedding feast - as **the sign** (John says) of what He has in mind to do. For Jesus didn't just come to perform miracles and make our lives here on earth better - with this sign He is telling us: *He came for a wedding*. In fact, more than just a wedding: His wedding. He came to take His Bride, the Church, to be His very own. To become one flesh with her. With us. He came to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah: **“as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”**

It is not yet time for Jesus' nuptials - as He says: **His hour has not yet come**. But He will *use* this wedding to point the faith of His disciples forward in time; to point to what He has come to do, and He does so by changing water into wine. Now, this miracle serves as a sign because the water is no ordinary water, and the wine becomes no ordinary wine! Jesus used water in jugs that were used for purification purposes - or in other words, for Law purposes; Old Testament purposes. For with His coming, there will soon be no more need of them. Jesus has come to usher in the New Testament, fulfill (to the brim!) all the requirements of the Law, and Himself be our purification from sin and uncleanness. And so when this water becomes wine, it becomes no ordinary wine, but the best of the best - recalling some other words of the prophet Isaiah, who said: **“On this mountain the Lord**

***Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine - the best of meats and the finest of wines.***" (Isaiah 25:6 NIV)

Now, Cana was not the mountain where the Lord prepared His feast and wine - *that mountain was named Calvary*. For there is where our heavenly Bridegroom laid down His life for His Bride. There is where Jesus was forsaken by His Father and left His mother, to cling to His Bride. There is where the Feast of His body and blood was prepared for us. And there - just like at Cana - it looked as if the party was over, and there was no more wine, no more joy, no more life.

But just as at Cana, the best was yet to come! And so just as Jesus provided the best wine at Cana when things looked over, so with His resurrection on Easter, Jesus has now provided for us the best of the best - the purification of us sinners in the waters of Holy Baptism, the feast of His body and blood in Holy Communion, and the promise of a seat at His Table in the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom - the feast which will have no end. With the first of His miracles at Cana, Jesus wants you to know - He didn't just come to make our lives here on earth better. He came for a wedding. *Your* wedding.

And we're no trophy brides, you and me! Like Israel, we have prostituted ourselves with sin and been adulterous with false gods of all shapes and sizes - fearing, loving, and trusting things *in* this world and *of* this world rather than our heavenly Bridegroom. But Jesus did not come *because* we were lovely, but to *make* us lovely. To forgive our sins and dress us in the white robe of purity and righteousness. That we ***no more be termed Forsaken or Desolate***, but receive ***the crown of beauty from the hand of our Lord***.

And so our Lord, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13), with His *first* miracle points us to the *end* - what He has come to do. That like His disciples, ***we believe in Him***. We believe in Him *for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish . . .* but not until death parts us! Because death can no longer part us! His resurrection is our guarantee - that the life here begun in Him, will last forever.

And so at Cana, ***Jesus manifested His glory***. The glory that came down to earth for you and me.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.