

There Must Be Fun!

Sermon for the 2nd Sunday in Epiphany

Sermon Text: John 2:1-11



On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus also was invited to the wedding with His disciples. ³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." ⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." ⁶ Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they

filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. ⁹ When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹ This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.

Have fun! I say to my son before he starts on the hard work of writing his thesis paper! With these words, I mean to say that I hope that all that hard work is also at least a little fun! Isn't that what we everyone wants? We want life to be fun! That little word fun is used to judge whether a wedding, a vacation, or even an entire life was worthwhile. And if it wasn't fun, we think that the whole thing was a disaster. In our sermon text today, we get to know a Jesus who isn't against fun, but for it! Or do you think that a life with Jesus is less fun? When we pray at the table: "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest!" then we shouldn't be surprised when Jesus answers our prayer and really becomes our guest! And then it will be really fun! When Jesus is with us, we should also not be surprised when great things happen at the meal. It was like this when Jesus performed a miracle for the first time. In Jesus' first miracle, He lets us know that He brings joy and we may have joy! And perhaps this first miracle means even more. Perhaps being with Jesus is actually a great feast of joy from beginning to end! Too often we have imagined Jesus as an out-of-touch ascetic. Or at best, as someone who was always dripping in sweat, overworked, and making an effort only to help the poor and sick, so that he didn't even have time to simply eat and drink. Too often we Christians go about trying to imitate this image of Jesus and have a bad sense of humor when people are having fun. We think we must sit at the table to eat with a guilty conscience. Or celebrate weddings with sackcloth and ashes and sad faces so that happiness doesn't get

out of hand. Such a Jesus who always looks grouchy when we are happy, isn't seen in the Bible. We should realize that Jesus often also ate and drank happily, and that one of the great complaints of the pharisees was exactly that: that Jesus ate and drank with sinners. No, Jesus is not for a Christianity with frowns and without joy! He also wants to be our guest when we are in the middle of life; when we are happy; when we celebrate; when we marry. "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest!" We may also pray this when we are happy about an important event and when we give thanks for God's wonderful gifts that He gives us in creation. So as Christians, we may also celebrate! Ahhh (breathe a sigh of relief...) Alongside all the hard work that God gives us in the congregation, in the family, and at our jobs, and alongside the difficult burdens that God lays before our door every day--because unfortunately our world is still not okay—we can still celebrate! No, that doesn't express it strong enough. If Jesus, for His first miracle in Cana, authoritatively assisted at a joyful celebration, then celebrating is not just a footnote to His other important agenda. No, celebrating is actually a part of the agenda itself. And if, right at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus blesses people at a wedding with a miracle of wine, then celebrating is even part of His revelation. Yes, we may even say, precisely because Jesus is there, we can have a happy celebration in the first place!

"In Jesus is life and in Him is the fullness of life." John writes this. And in this miracle of wine at Cana, John explains what that can mean in practical terms. Jesus shows us that He can fill our whole life just as He filled the jugs with wine. The transformation from water to wine was certainly no accident at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. In Judaism at that time, wine was a symbol for the coming of the Messiah. And if the wine ran out, it was certainly a symbol and a sign that things weren't going well for the people. And if things weren't going well for the people, the reason for it must be that the laws were not being obeyed. And so, people constantly tried to act even better so that the commandments of God would save them. The water jugs that stood before the door of the house at that time, were symbols of such a law because they were intended for the religious purification of the Jews. They were part of the laws that were supposed to establish a pure relationship with God. Life should succeed through these commandments. And that's exactly what the people couldn't live up to. That hasn't changed to this day. I would like to lead a good life. I know the 10 commandments and know that they are good. But I can't keep them. Just as Jesus took the ritual jars back then and filled them with good wine. He does this also with our life. Back then the people of Israel had an earnest desire and thirst for freedom and life! And in this situation, Jesus came as a guest! And Jesus gave when it ran out. Yes, He even gave the good really expensive wine! With this act, Jesus made it very clear: The Messiah is now here! Life in abundance has now begun! Isn't that also our desire today? That Jesus is there for us. That he quenches our thirst. In the place where you had little comfort, little hope, and above all, little joy? Isn't it so that precisely this Jesus is missing from our whole life? If we not only eat our food without saying grace, but also approach everything without Jesus and therefore eat meaningless bread and have a pointless life? We buy our food by trading the money we earned. Also, our phone, our computer, our T.V., and last, but not least, our wine. All these things we enjoy entirely without Jesus. However, we still have hunger even with full bellies and all the luxury items one can think of! And what a hunger we have! You can hear the distress calls everywhere. People are unhappy in their families, unhappy in their relationships! Unhappy and dissatisfied about the future: The result is drug addiction, alcohol addiction. Quarreling between husband and wife. Between parents and children, etc.... In this situation, I would like to cry out and shout! "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest!" Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest when we eat. Also when we marry. Also when we enjoy a glass of wine with a friend: Our Messiah, Jesus, wants to give us life in abundance. He wants to be there as a guest when things are going well for us. Jesus doesn't want our

life to be a tragedy. He wants life to be a celebration. And with Jesus, it can be. He fills our life with God so that our life succeeds. And last but not least, so that we also have fun! The wedding at Cana was a joyous celebration because Jesus was there. Your life and my life can also be a happy celebration because Jesus is there.

A religion teacher once explained this same miracle of Jesus' wine to a class. And to make his students think, he asked them, "If you had been there then, and had tasted the good wine that Jesus made out of water, what would you have done?" A little boy knew the answer immediately: I would have invited Him to my party! Yes. And that is exactly what we should do, too! "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest!" Amen.