

Sunday, January 20, 2019

Isaiah 62:1-5 | Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

### Abundance to Share

We continue In this season of Epiphany to focus upon the person of Jesus as we learn more about his being human but also acknowledging that he is the Son of God. Two weeks ago, we focused on the Wise Men's visit and gift presentation to the child Jesus. Last week we experienced the waters of baptism and how Jesus was recognized as God's beloved Son to whom we should listen. Our story today takes place after Jesus has called his disciples and they are all invited to a wedding.

Weddings were long celebrations lasting several days and everyone ate and drank for there was abundance of food the master of the banquet would see to it that there was always more of everything as people would eat and visit, and continue to do this for days as they wished the happy couple a wonderful marriage. There was abundance all around- guests ready to celebrate, food piled high ready to be serve; vegetables and fruit on many platters, desserts and sweets available. And there would be wine—of all types- good and not so good, but there would be many jars and jars of wine. After all when the wine ran out, the party was over.

Jesus and his friends are enjoying the evening when Jesus mother comes up to him and says, "There's no more wine." Mary knows her son and his life's purpose and knows that he can do something about keeping the party going particularly about the need for wine. But Jesus tells his mother—it's not yet my time. But Mary knows Jesus and so she tells the servants at the banquet to do whatever he says.

How long the servants waited we do not know. How long Jesus wrestled with the "I just want to be human today" vs being the Son of God we can only imagine. But in time he tells the servants to fill up the large jars with water. After that they are to take some out and give it to the master of the banquet to taste. They do what Jesus says. The water was now wine. And according the master of the banquet, it was good tasting wine. The party continues after the bridegroom tastes the wine. He is not aware of what occurred but the servants are!

But why is this a significant story in Jesus' ministry when only the servants know what really happened? We might imagine what happened that night in the servants quarters—wine, wine wine, they needed more wine and Mary's son Jesus made it. Not cheap stuff either—good stuff! But who is Mary's son to be able to do this? Did the disciples know of Jesus' miracle wine? Most likely because Mary spoke to Jesus- as a mother to her son. Yet when Jesus got up to get the servants to fill up the

water jars they might have realized that something was happening. But in this community celebration, there is no spotlight on Jesus for saving the banquet from being over too soon, but what does exist is Jesus working with Mary, the servants and the master of the banquet to eliminate an embarrassing problem at a feast and what are they doing- building each other up. They become allies on a special mission to save the wedding banquet.

This demonstrates an extravagant act which might introduce a new order of priorities for the disciples, the observant servants and even the master of the banquet. It is an extravagant act which reflects the need to share and to show others that acts of love may be given person to person or without acknowledgment. Jesus was not looking for acknowledgement—he was not yet ready. But Mary knew that he could help prevent a poor predicament at the wedding. What Jesus did do was to use his gifts for the sake of others. Just as we are called to do.

Everyone here has been given gifts to share. To discern these gifts means to figure out what you like to do and can do well. There are many kinds of gifts and the diversity within this community reflects the diversity within God. There is no hierarchy to these gifts but it is the Holy Spirit which bestows these gifts on individuals. These gifts, individuals and experiences come together to form community that is overflowing in abundance! The problem for many members then is not knowing that they have been gifted, but how to use these gifts and what to do with them. This is when we need to recognize again and in new ways that we are allies building up the community of faith – what was done before may be let go, and new ideas of sharing together enable us to search again for the Living Christ? So the question we need to ask is as a church family how are we responding to the abundant blessings we receive from God? And then out of this abundance, how are we working together for Jesus' sake? How are we able to let the banquet continue? We need to remember Jesus. Often we forget why we come—it is because of Christ Jesus that the church came into existence. It is through Christ that we can be respectful and loving with and to one another all because the Spirit has called you too!

We will renew our faith today through a covenant promise that many people have used for almost 300 hundred years. It is a promise or renewal of faith as well as a commitment to serve using the gifts God has given to us. Let us receive the abundance of God's Blessings and respond by renewing our faith and experiencing God's love which is overflowing for us all. We are allies in building our community for God has blessed us with abundant gifts to share. Let us rejoice together as we renew our faith and be renewed in God's Spirit! Amen.