

**Text: John 2:1-11**

**Theme: Jesus Revealed His Glory**

**Date: January 14, 2007 (Epiphany 2C)**

Introduction: How many of us have told a story that makes us look good? The play we made at recess, the good grade we received on a test, the contribution that we made that made the whole thing better. An accomplishment, a story from the glory days, something to brag about. Or maybe something a little more crafty than that: bringing someone else down so that you appear better than they do.

It seems natural for us to want to climb to the top of the pile, and be better than everyone else. Today, our small, sinful pride is eclipsed by the revealing of Jesus' Glory. Jesus revealed His Glory in his own time, and for his own purpose.

### I. In his own time

Our scripture lesson for today is the well-known description from the Apostle John of Jesus' first miracle. The wedding that we see was not grand, or noteworthy. The bride and groom are not even named, and we only hear about a few of the guests. This wedding is only important today because it is the setting for Jesus' first miracle.

It is shortly after Jesus' first disciples are called, and they travel to Cana for a wedding. Cana was a small town in Galilee, and one of Jesus' disciples, Nathan, came from there. Jesus and his disciples were invited, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. This may have been the wedding of a relative or friend, because Mary seems to have shared some responsibility for the banquet. According to Jewish custom, a wedding consisted of not only the ceremony, but a feast for the 7 days following. And sometime during this feast, they ran out of wine.

You can imagine how embarrassing it would be to run out of provisions at a feast. So Mary brings the lack of wine to Jesus' attention. It is clear that Mary expected something, but we can not be sure exactly what that was.

Jesus' response to Mary may seem less than fitting at first glance. **“Dear woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.”** When Jesus uses the word woman to address his mother, it sounds insulting to our ears, but that is not necessarily the case. It does identify some distance between the two, but this is on purpose. The only other time we see Jesus call Mary 'woman' was when he spoke to her from the cross, looking out for her continued care and provision. Here Jesus tells her that their interests are not the same, and that he could not be rushed into action. Mary was trying to save this newly married couple from embarrassment, so action would have to be taken quickly. Jesus had a different purpose and a different timetable, and Mary was chastised for her impatience.

How often are we impatient when waiting for Jesus to bless us? Isn't impatience really pride applied to time? We want what we want, and we want it now. Maybe it's looking forward to that next vacation, always wanting it to come sooner than it does. Your career is not showing the progress that you had hoped. "I've spent enough time waiting for others to come around to my point of view, and I'm through waiting."

It is difficult to wait for promises to be fulfilled. I asked God to bless me with spiritual growth, a fuller wisdom, love for my neighbor, but I don't see it yet. We look around us and see this sinful world, and we wait for the end of sorrows. We await the joys of Heaven, and it seems like Jesus is very slow in coming.

When we have a hard time submitting to God's timetable, it is helpful to keep in mind that God has perfect timing. Jesus came to earth in the fullness of time, when God's Will had chosen. He always took action in the setting that he desired. In John chapter 11, we hear about Jesus' friend Lazarus, who was very sick. Jesus waited a few days before he left, and Lazarus died during that time. But in both of these cases, Jesus took action at the time that was most fitting for Him. He came to earth in the fullness of time, and he went to Lazarus when it was most fitting for his plan.

When we look at Jesus' timing, perhaps the most bewildering example has to do with us. **“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** (Rom 5:8) We were enemies of God, and Jesus chose that time to pay for the sins of all mankind. Jesus' timing was to give us everything when we deserved nothing. He waited for the perfect time then, and he is waiting now to return in Glory. **“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”** (2 Pet. 3:9) Jesus is long in coming because of his patience.

Before Mary leaves the story, she demonstrates a faith that is worth imitating. Jesus does not grant her request, yet she tells the servants to do whatever he told them. She was humbled by her son's refusal, but trusts her Lord for the best. Notice that Mary did not receive a “no” but a “not yet.” By faith, she reads between the lines of the refusal to see a better answer to her prayer.

When our Lord apparently says “no” to our prayers, it is for the best. Our God already has something better in store for us. That may be joy or sorrow, release from pain or allowing us to continue in our weakness, so that we rely more fully on His Strength. Whatever it is, God's blessings come to us according to his timeline, and not a moment sooner.

Transition: In Jesus' reply to Mary's request, he identified that the timing was not yet appropriate. He also pointed out that he had a different interest in the situation. Jesus revealed his glory for his own purpose.

## II. For his own purpose

The time had now come for Jesus to take action. He instructs the servants to fill up six water pots that were commonly used, and available. The Jews kept these pots around to hold water for washing their hands, dishes, and to rinse the dust off their feet. We are told that they held twenty to thirty gallons each, the size of a metal trash can.

Some people, in looking for ways to criticize Jesus, have said that giving people such a great quantity of such a great quality of wine was leading those guests into temptation. But isn't it the same with all of the gifts which God gives to his people? Any gift of God can be abused by the sinful nature, but that does not taint the gift or the giver. Man is not to be perfected in exemption from temptation, but by victory in temptation. Our Lord gives blessings, and his people are to use them according to His Will.

Jesus' time had come, but his purpose in doing this miracle was different than Mary's request. Mary wanted to save this couple from embarrassment. Jesus was there to reveal his glory. The word that is translated as miracle here has the idea of a sign that points to something. This wonderful work of power over creation pointed to Jesus' deity. This work showed that he was God.

How often do we, like Mary, seek after our own wants and desires? We try to set up our own ideas over what God wants. We come to him with selfish requests, seeking our own good instead of His. How often don't we think, "I know best." We would rather do what we think is important than do the work of God.

Jesus Christ revealed his glory not for selfish reasons or sinful pride. His purpose was to do the Father's Will. He revealed his glory to strengthen the faith of his disciples. **This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.** God's power works to strengthen our faith.

Jesus revealed his glory to show how much he cared for us. That God would send his Glorious and Almighty Son to die for poor, lowly sinners. If God cares enough to take care of even the simple things like wine at a wedding, how much more will he care about the greatest thing, providing for our eternal salvation. Jesus' purpose in revealing his glory is to strengthen your faith and mine.

The result of God's power working in our lives is that our faith is strengthened. This is the purpose for the signs that Jesus did. John records these miracles to further convince us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

Now, the work which God requires of us is not something that we do. Jesus says in John 6 verses 27 and following: **Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."** Then they asked him, **"What must we do to do the works God requires?"** Jesus answered, **"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."**

Go, and do the work of God.

Conclusion: Brothers and sisters, our sinful pride leads us to be impatient and selfish. Christ humbles our proud hearts by teaching us patience as we wait for his glorious return, and by quelling our selfishness by being selfless himself. Even in revealing his glory, the goal was to strengthen the faith of his disciples. Jesus revealed his glory: in his own time and for his own purpose. Amen.