

Epiphany 2C
January 15, 2017
John 2:1-11

When we hear the account of Jesus at the wedding in Cana, we often think of how it shows how high and holy Jesus holds marriage or how Jesus always gives far more than undeserving sinners either ask or deserve. And these are both 100% true. Jesus does hold marriage in holy esteem for he is the one who instituted it. Jesus does always give more than we deserve as he freely gives heaven when we only deserve hell; he gives rescue where we deserve abandonment. But those aren't the most important reasons St. John records this account. John writes these words that you believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing you have life in his name.

So as we consider the account, the wedding at Cana is one of those where Jesus gives us signs that reveal him as our salvation. And that is why John tells us at the end of today's gospel that by this miracle in Cana, Jesus revealed his glory and his disciples trusted in him.

St. John tells us, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee." But don't think of the word sign like we use it today, that is as a symbol or something that symbolically stands for something else. No this sign is nothing other than a miracle. It is a miracle by which something is revealed about Jesus. In this miracle, Jesus revealed the glory of the Lord. Jesus revealed that God had come to work salvation. What is hidden from plain sight is now revealed. Jesus is the One promised by God to save.

In the Bible, there are these signs that clearly make known something that you would never have the power to figure out on your own...something that no matter how hard you tried you would not be able to understand or see. It has to be revealed.

Think of it as something like a present that is waiting to be opened. There is something you see and something that is hidden. They are both real but only one is visible and the other is not. God gives these as something real and tangible and visible for faith to grasp. This is how our confessions speak about the Lord's gifts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is something visible and there is something hidden. And what is visible doesn't look all that special. Lowly and ordinary water. Simple and common bread and wine. Yet these are signs in the sense that in the use of Baptism and Communion, those common elements are inseparably connected to Jesus. They give Jesus to us.

I'm not saying that by every miracle of Jesus we have a new sacrament. But I am saying that Jesus' miracles single him out and reveal him who he really is. The miracles of Jesus, reveal his glory, reveal that he is exactly who the Scriptures say he is. And who is that? He is the Christ, the Messiah, the One anointed with the Spirit to carry out God's work of salvation. That means he is true God from God. He is also 100% true man. He is One who has been born, who lived here among us on earth for a time. He is One who has experienced in his human flesh everything common to mankind, experiencing everything that we experience. These reveal his glory as the Son of God, made flesh in the person of Jesus, who has come to save.

One of the ways that Jesus has chosen to make his glory known to you is these signs. But here is where many and even our human reason love to throw up objections and insist that this is a problem. It isn't that the signs or the sacraments are problems. No, the problem is that we wouldn't choose them, we wouldn't pick them. We wouldn't design it that Jesus would be found revealing his glory in Baptism and Communion and Words. We're naturally born as part of that evil and adulterous generation that wants to search after all sorts of signs, any and every imaginable sign except that which Jesus has gifted to us. We would run after Jesus and try to find him in heartfelt emotion. We would want to search out Jesus in a feeling of divine presence. We would seek Jesus out in trying to be holy. We would peer to and fro for some tangible, visible proof of God's love, his presence, his guidance, his healing. Our hearts would be filled with doubt that Jesus is actually going to do what he has promised unless we see some sort of proof apart from what he already given. How foolish we can be.

Everything you need is here for you today...in this Sanctuary. All of Jesus and his gifts are here and present in the gifts and signs where he hides himself. You hear Jesus proclaimed as the Son of God as evidenced by his miracle of changing water into wine. You see and hear him hidden behind a man in a white alb saying to you, "I absolve you. I forgive your sins." You see and hear water poured in the name of the Triune God. One felt his head get wet as he was crucified with Jesus and buried and raised with Christ. You see and touch and taste that the Lord is good. Today...right here...right now, Jesus reveals his glory to you in the signs he has chosen to gift to you.

At a wedding celebration in Cana, the Lord Jesus reveals exactly who he is. This was the first of his miraculous signs and his disciples put their faith in him. This was written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing you have life in his name.

Jesus continues to reveal his glory by giving his gifts, his signs. To you he has given a sign. In cloths, lying in a manger, at a wedding in Cana, on cross atop Golgatha, in a baptismal font and in the gifts of his altar, Jesus gives you his glory. This is his great love for you. Here he brings glory to himself by giving himself to you. Here he creates and strengthens trust in him that clings to him exactly where he reveals himself. Here, in Words and in Sacraments, Jesus gives you his glory...the glory of his perfect life, the glory of his life-giving death, the glory of a death-defying resurrection, the glory of his soul-sustaining forgiveness, the glory of his bodily presence. All this is gift to you for here you are his guest, he is host and he always gives good gifts.