

Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Second Sunday after Epiphany
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Sermon by Pastor Gary A. Pufahl
Christ cares about your cares

Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ² Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴ Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Six stone water jars, which the Jews used for ceremonial cleansing, were standing there, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. ⁸ Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." And they did. ⁹ When the master of the banquet tasted the water that had now become wine, he did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew). The master of the banquet called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!" ¹¹ This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

—John 2:1-11 EHV

What are the three biggest problems you are facing right now in your life? Just think about them for a moment. I won't ask you to share them today, but do you have something in mind? Perhaps some of you have some real health concerns going on right now. Perhaps some of you are experiencing some financial struggles. Maybe some of you are going through marital problems or family problems or relationship problems. Maybe you are concerned about a family member who has some addictions. Maybe you are struggling with friends. Some of these problems may seem bigger than others. And yet all of them are cares that you have in your life. You think about them. You are concerned, at least to some degree, about them.

And I'm going to guess that when you have these challenges, one of the first things you do is pray. Right? As Christians you know that God can handle all things. Therefore, you go to him in prayer. You ask for his help, his healing.

But what happens when it seems as though God just doesn't listen? You ask the Lord to help you, but it seems as though he doesn't listen? Do you ever wonder if he cares about your cares?

My friends, my goal today is to help you find comfort and strength as you face those problems and cares in your life. And the way I would like to do that today is by reminding you of an account of Scripture that I am certain is very familiar to many of you.

It's the account of Jesus turning water into wine. "But, pastor, how does that account help me with my illnesses or my marital problems? How does Jesus' miracle of turning water into wine help with my financial struggles?"

Well, let me start out by simply saying, "Don't focus so much on the miracle itself. Rather look intently at Jesus and his way of doing the miracle." I think we can find an answer to those questions and discover that **Jesus cares about your cares.**

John sets the stage for us. "**Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no wine.'**"

Now, I just want to stop there a second. Does that sound like a horrible statement from Mary to Jesus? I don't think so. It's just an observation, right? When we have our potlucks, and your table is last to be called, you're looking down the line at what's left. You whisper to your neighbor, "Hey, the sandwiches are almost gone and there is a lot of people to serve yet." Right? It's an observation. We do those kinds of things when we are at public gatherings. So, this isn't such a big deal, is it?

But notice how Jesus responds. "**Woman, what does that have to do with you and me?**" Doesn't that sound just a little bit harsh? I mean, this is his mother. Why did Jesus respond that way to her?

Well, first of all, he wasn't really yelling at her, but he knew what she wanted. We weren't there to hear the tone in her voice, but what was she saying? Why did she go to Jesus? Well, she knew that Jesus could do something about this situation. She's saying to him, "My son, they ran out of wine. You can do something about this situation. Can you help them out with your power?"

Now, I'm thinking that that was a pretty neat request of Mary. A care arose for the wedding party. Mary had some role that was important for the wedding celebration. If you have ever planned a wedding, you know how you want it be just perfect, right? Well, Mary was concerned for the bride and groom, too.

She made the observation that they didn't plan right. They ran out of wine. They didn't have *Total Wine & More* where they could run in order to get more wine. So, she went to Jesus. I think that's really neat.

It had been thirty years since the angels announced Jesus' birth and showed forth their glory. It had been nearly thirty years since Magi came and worshipped Jesus. And yet through it all Mary pondered all those things in her heart. She knew who Jesus was. She knew what he was capable of doing. She knew he was the Son of God who had all power and might. So, she comes to him with a request. I think that's pretty neat on Mary's part.

But Jesus also wanted to teach an important lesson. Throughout his entire life, Jesus made it known that he was here to do the will of his *Father*, not the will of human beings. He had a real distaste for people pushing him to do miracles. He wasn't here as a miracle-man. No, Jesus came to do the will of his Father, not the will of human beings. So, he says, **"My time has not yet come."**

I don't know about you, but I sometimes find myself asking Jesus to do certain things in my life on my timetable. "Lord, please help me." You have a problem or challenge in your life, and you go to Jesus in prayer. And it's great that we go to Jesus in prayer. He wants us to pray to him with everything in our lives. But it is also so important for us to pray, **"Not my will but your will be done."**

Certainly, God wants us to come to him and ask. In the book of James, God says, **"You do not have because you do not ask"** (James 4:2). God wants us to go to him in prayer and ask for his help. But let's keep in mind what Jesus is also saying here. **"My time has not yet come."** His timetable is often different from our timetable. He has a different perspective and a different goal in mind. And his goal **"infinitely more than we can ask or imagine"** (Ephesians 3:20).

My friends, I encourage you to not give up hope even though it appears as though Jesus isn't answering your prayers. Does Jesus care about you? Does he care about families where mom and dad are always fighting? Does he care about your heart aches and troubles? Does he care about the struggles you are facing financially and with your health? Does he care about your relationships with others?

Most certainly he does. But let us remember that his timing of doing things is different from ours. Does Jesus want to help you and provide for you and take care of you? He most certainly does. But he has the perfect timing on doing all of that.

I'd like to encourage you to see how Jesus operates in this account. He's not going to be manipulated by people, but he surely cares about our cares.

Mary knew that about Jesus. She knew her Son as a loving, compassionate, caring person. She knew his heart and how he loved as one who regularly went out of his way to help others. She didn't know exactly what Jesus was going to do. But this she did know - she knew that Jesus cared about her cares.

And he did. I always wondered what it was like to have Jesus as your child. He never disobeyed. He never lipped off. He was completely loving and respectful. He willingly helped with the chores around the house, probably without even being asked.

Mary knew that Jesus cared about her cares. She didn't know if he was going to do anything or not. But she certainly knew Jesus' heart.

So, she went up to the servants and said, **"Do whatever he tells you."** John continues, **"Six stone water jars, which the Jews used for ceremonial cleansing, were standing there, each holding twenty or thirty gallons."** They were empty. They served their purpose. The guests had washed and are having a good time at the party. Nothing is in them. The servants had emptied them.

Now get this. **"Jesus told them, 'Fill the jars with water.' So they filled them to the brim."** The servants do what Jesus told them to do. I don't know if they used buckets to bring the water from a nearby cistern, or if they transferred water from other storage containers, or if they had to make a trip to the local well that supplied water from the community. Whatever they had to do, they filled the stone jars with water, between 120 and 180 gallons of water. They fill them to the brim just as Jesus had asked them to do.

I find it amazing that the servants did it. As ridiculous as the request is, they did it. They weren't sure what Jesus was going to do. All they knew is that the washing was over. The jars had been used for their purpose. And Jesus is now telling them to fill them up.

And they did. That's pretty neat. And Jesus said, "**Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.**" That's a pretty ridiculous request, too, isn't it? I mean, put yourself in the sandals of the servants. You're going to take the master of the banquet ... water? Big deal. It's water. Right?

But they did it. As ridiculous as his command might have sounded, they did it. And while they were carrying that water to the master of the banquet, something amazing happened. The Son of God had decided that this would be a great time, in line with his Father's will, to let the world see that he not only was the Son of Man, but that he was the Son of God as well.

And as unbelievable as it sounds, the Son of God rearranged the molecular structure of that H₂O. Unbelievable! With a thought, he transformed the molecules that were in those jars. And he didn't just change water into *a wine*. Those people knew their wines. Look at what happened.

"When the master of the banquet tasted the water that had now become wine, he did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew). The master of the banquet called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!" It wasn't wine from a box. This was wine with a cork. Right? Problem solved. They weren't going to run out of wine anymore because they had plenty of the best wine.

Okay, so what does this account have to do with your problems? How does this account help you find comfort when you experience problems in your life?

Well, let me ask you. Of all the problems that we see in this world, how high would you rank running out of wine at a wedding? Probably not very high. Oh sure, for people who are planning their weddings, of course, they want everything to be perfect. But this is not some life-or-death situation. The bride and groom faced an *embarrassing* situation, but it wasn't life or death.

And that's the point. Look at Jesus. Even though this doesn't rank very high on the world's problems, Jesus still cared about their cares. He wasn't sparing them from death or disease. He was just sparing them from *embarrassment*. Why? Because of his love for them. He saw that it would be in their best interest to spare them from embarrassment.

I think that is so awesome. There is nothing in your life that is so trivial, that so minor, that you can't bring it to God. But the fact that he is concerned about the small cares reveals his concerns for our big cares as well.

In fact, look at why Jesus did this miracle in the first place. It wasn't so that he would receive such great praise and acclamations. Very few people knew really what was going on. John actually tells us what Jesus' goal was. **"This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him."**

That's important. His disciples trusted him. He's also told us this event so that we would put our faith in him. Think about what this means. On the surface, this might not seem like a really great way to start his miraculous ministry. But when you think about it, this is an awesome display of power, isn't it? This man is God, who with a thought and a word can transform matter. He demonstrated what was said in the Gospel of John, one chapter earlier: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made."** That means that you and I and our bodies were also made by him. And if you look at what he can do with H₂O and make *that* better, I believe that he can even make *me* better. He can and he does.

Just look at the extent Jesus is willing to go to in order to make your life better. John also wrote one chapter earlier, **"Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"** When I see him do this wine thing, and how Christ cares about my cares, I believe he is concerned about the really big problems of my life too. He is concerned about my sins. He is concerned about my salvation. He is concerned about where I will be forever.

Christ cares about my cares. He takes care of it all. Not with a loud massive display of power, but in a quiet subtle way. He takes our sins away at the cross. He quietly does that greatest miracle of bringing us to faith in him. He makes us his own in Baptism. He forgives us our sins in the Lord's Supper. We believe that he has changed us. We are changed from enemies to his children.

And no matter how hard things may get in this world, no matter how chronic your pain may be or how embarrassing your life may be, this Jesus will change you. A time is coming when the ultimate display of his compassion will be seen in power. He will give you new bodies as you stand with him victorious. If you see the compassion and power of Jesus in the really small things of this life, you know you can trust him with the really big things as well.

I find it amazing that Jesus chose to show us how much he cares about us and how he is able to help us with all problems by turning water into wine at a wedding celebration in Cana of Galilee. You see, dear Christian, your Lord Jesus who was concerned about a wedding in Cana is even more concerned about everything happening in your

marriage, and your family and your personal life. If he helped a family when they ran out of wine, how much more he is concerned about the daily problems facing you in your home this coming week or coming year.

No, Jesus might not operate on your timetable. But here is the truth. **Christ cares about your cares.** Amen.