

# “Glory Revealed”

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**1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2: 1-11**

Our wedding story...

Jesus' first miracle at the wedding in Cana is the third story we celebrate during Epiphany. Jesus has been baptized and has begun his ministry. In this story he is surrounded by his disciples and his mother.

They are at a wedding where Mary must have had some hosting duties because she noticed the wine had run out. Instead of going to the head steward, she goes to her son, who is a guest with his disciples.

The interaction between Mary and Jesus sounds harsh to our modern ears. But it was something more like this:

“The wine has run out.”

“Don't worry; you don't know exactly what's going on. Leave this to me and I will take care of things in my way.”

We should note that Mary doesn't go to Jesus to ask him to fix the problem. She goes to let him know the status.

Mary tells the servants to do whatever Jesus commands. Her faith is complete even without all the answers.

Jesus cares about our lives – ordinary moments and big events

We are invited to go to Jesus and let him know our “status.” In his own way he will take care of things. We don't always know the bigger picture. He sees everything.

Our faith can be strong even when we don't know the whole story. We can't control everything. Thank goodness.

Along with our faith in Jesus Christ, Paul's letter to the Corinthians sets forth the spiritual gifts we have all had “activated” within us.

Activated – triggered – started – stimulated – galvanized – initiated.

Each and every one of us is gifted.

Let's take a wedding...

A wedding planner is able to put an event together with precise detail and connections to others who will be part of the ceremony and reception.

A cook or chef will prepare a wedding feast.

A baker will create a beautiful sweet creation.

Friends will support and care for the bride and groom.

An officiant will share God's good word of foundation and love in the new relationship. And also make things legal.

Family provide resources.

A seamstress and tailor will make lovely garments.

Hosts will share hospitality with the guests.

Tying our epistle and our gospel together takes a little creativity. We'll see if my weaving of stories makes sense.

Jesus is at a small-town wedding, because he cares about all aspects of our lives – big and small. He turns water into wine to reveal himself and his glory to his disciples and the servants and, also, to do some reparation work. For the Jews, six is an incomplete number. Seven is the Jewish number of perfection. John, our author, is writing to the Jews while also inviting Gentiles into the Good News story of Jesus Christ. There are six stone jars of water. Jesus makes an imperfect number perfect by performing the miracle. There are still only six, but Jesus changes water into wine showing a new grace-filled way to live, instead of the imperfect Jewish law. The law is imperfect, constricting, and suffocating. The grace of Jesus is unending. The grace of Jesus is freeing. The grace of Jesus is boundless.

Paul writes about the gifts of the Spirit. I listed some of the roles different people serve in a wedding. Now, I have never officiated or been a guest at a wedding where people were speaking in tongues. However, having officiated and attended many weddings, I do know there are certain people needed for certain things.

For instance, I wouldn't expect the chef of the wedding reception to pay for the entire fete. I wouldn't expect the parents of the couple to take out the trash at the end of the evening. The officiant doesn't normally bake the cake and the hosts of the evening don't play in the band.

Everyone has a specific task to make sure the wedding happens as planned. Different people have the gifts needed for each aspect of the celebration.

But wait a minute... what if it's not that neat and tidy? What if the chef must make play the piano for the processional? What if the happy couple need to clear the dishes at the end of dinner? What if the parents of the couple are the band for the reception?

In the grand wedding of life, with Jesus Christ as the bridegroom of the church, what part of this grand plan are we each responsible for? What are we good at? What are we not so good at, but still believe God can use us? We are living in times when we are all called to do more than expected. We are called to do more than we think we are capable of doing. We are called to be what is imperfect and allow a miracle to happen within and beyond us.

I know for a fact I could not possibly lead the choir or bells. I cannot play the organ. But I can encourage and appreciate the beautiful music I hear in this place. I don't think I could run the office the way Jeanette does, but I do believe I can do my part to help her do her job with more ease.

I love the word in our passage today – activate – God activates our spiritual gifts. God plugs us in to do good things in the world. We have a never-ending life source. Our batteries don't run out, even if we occasionally need to recharge. There are things about each and every one of us that are absolutely brilliant. What is your absolute brilliance? How are you and how am I present at the

wedding? What are we doing to make our part meaningful to others? What are we willing to do that may not be so brilliant but absolutely necessary?

Jesus performed his first miracle. His glory was revealed. Of course, he is the Son of God and will go on to save the entire world. Pretty brilliant. As his followers and as the ones who confess to love him and strive to live out his teachings and actions, we must know our parts, the gifts and the talents and the needs of the world.

Mary brought a concern to Jesus and then let it go, knowing she had brought it to the right place. The servants were given a command by Mary and they obeyed. Jesus gave them another one and they brought the new wine to the steward. The steward told the Bridegroom.

The miracle was complete. Seventy years later John wrote it down for all the followers of Jesus and for those who want to be part of the celebration.

This is a happy story in a small town where a couple were married. They are not the main characters but rather the backdrop. Whatever part we are called to be in life, the ones who are loud and out in front, or the ones following behind to make sure everyone gets their piece of cake, or the ones who show up after everyone else has gone home to clean and polish and prepare for the next occasion, we are all called to serve. Sometimes in surprising ways.

When we use our many Holy Spirit gifts, plugged in by God, then glory is revealed over and over again. The miracles are endless. And grace abounds. Amen.