

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

The Lord’s first miracle recorded for you was done at a wedding. This was a fitting thing in many ways as he manifests his glory, and you see and know who Jesus is for you. He is your bridegroom, and you are his bride the church. The Epistle reading teaches you this well. God instituted marriage before the fall into sin and he changed water into wine at the wedding of a couple in Cana.

Jesus takes care of this couple by literally changing water into wine. Notice what the master of the feast does. Who does he go to and what does he say? St. John tells us, “When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.’” Jesus worked the miracle, and the bridegroom was commended.

There’s something to all of this with first miracle at a wedding. Many theologians and preachers have made note of this throughout church history. God loves marriage. Marriage is a godly thing. It was created before the fall into sin and is connected to the very core order and establishment of this world. The estate of the family is intertwined with the institution of marriage between one man and one woman. The Lord attended this wedding here and worked a miracle for the couple even as his blessing is attached to marriage, the institution he has created. He shows you something of his order both in the world and the order and glory of the life to come.

A tell-tale sign of something good is when it is attacked by the sin and the devil. That’s because the devil is smart and knows what God establishes and orders is good. He attacks that which is good that God has created and the order which God has given to it. Not only that but it confesses something about God too, who he is and what he does. The reading from Ephesians 5 is so important. “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

God’s order is seen in marriage as it reflects the order of creation and then with the church his salvation in Christ as the perfect bridegroom which makes known his glory for you. The devil knows this, so he goes after it like he went after it in the Garden of Eden. The devil went to Eve first, not to Adam who was her head. He went to the “weaker vessel” as Scripture calls her and attacked the order of God. It happens today too as we behold what God gives and institutes as good yet sin against it rather than live according to God’s order.

Fundamentally all of you see this in attempts to redefine marriage according to man sinful desires. Clearly this is sinful and against God’s creation and order. Romans 1 sees this connection when man and man or woman and woman try to join together in the marital union this is a form of idolatry, worshipping a false god. That’s something in the church, you understand and why you are called by God to defend it before the world not cowering down to mobs.

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But holding up marriage, extolling it, and honoring it also means living according to God's order. Today the devil, the world, and your fallen flesh want to see the roles in marriage blurred. You might whole heartedly agree that it's between a man and a woman, as you should, but then the temptation is usurp marriage by living together as a couple without marriage or to want men to act like women and women to act like men. The devil tries to put in the minds of men that their honor, glory, and worth is not found in being the head of their wife, being Christ to them, but it's found in whatever suits their interests like their jobs, sports, activities, or in living up to the stereotype of a man who is lazy, makes noises, doesn't teach and boldly confess the faith, and never stands up for his wife and family.

Or likewise when it comes to being Christ to his wife, a husband sins when he is not treating her like Christ treats the church. Christ covers the sin of his bride, he washes her clean, and presents her as his beloved before the throne of God. He doesn't hold her sin against her or treat her as his object. No, the wife is the beloved of her husband who loves her as his own body and would sooner die rather than any harm spiritually, bodily, or in reputation come upon his wife. And he doesn't grumble or complain about this but speaks well of his bride because she is his and he is hers for to do so would be to speak ill of himself and to harm his wife, in any way, is to hate himself.

In the Epistle reading God teaches, "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'" God guides husbands what is to be lived. The Christian husband loves, forgives, leads, stands firm and without fear before God and the world. That's what a Christian husband's life is supposed to look like according to God's institution and word.

The wife says, "amen" to all of this. And she doesn't listen to the world and the lies of the devil which try to tell her glory is not her husband. The world tries to tell women and Christian wives that their glory is found in the world not in being the wife of her husband to whom God has given to her and in the great and glorious vocation of being a mother. For a time, I remember when I was elementary school age, something like being a homemaker was looked down upon as degrading to women. Yet even in 1955 C.S. Lewis wrote to a woman once, "I think I can understand that feeling about a housewife's work being like that of Sisyphus (who was the stone rolling gentleman). But it is surely, in reality, the most important work in the world. What do ships, railways, mines, cars, government etc exist for except that people may be fed, warmed, and safe in their own homes? As Dr Johnson said, 'To be happy at home is the end of all human endeavor'. (1st to be happy, to prepare for being happy in our own real Home hereafter: 2nd, in the meantime, to be happy in our houses.) We wage war in order to have peace, we work in order to have leisure, we produce food in order to eat it. So your job is the one for which all others exist."

The world hates women and doesn't want them to rejoice in being women. God says in 1 Corinthians, though, "woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man." The world and the devil try to teach women that their duty is in service to world where in reality God's word teaches us that world is in service to the family which the woman creates, nurtures, and sustained. The Christian wife doesn't resent her husband or usurp his authority but speaks well of him and honors him with her words and life just as the church speaks well of Christ and honor him with her words and life.

The woman's husband is her head and where head goes and leads, the body follows without grumbling or complaint but instead knowing that she follows the head as the head leads forth with the mindset that her good and the good of her children in the things of the world and especially the eternal things of God. A Christian woman says, "Amen" to this and gladly goes and submits and fixes her eyes on Christ. Womanhood is being covered with the honor and glory of Christ not in the honor and glory of the world and its false fame.

So, God calls you all to examine your life. He admonishes you by his mercy to conform your lives not to the patterns of this world but to the perfect order and life of his Scriptures. He calls you to teach this to your children too so that they would grow and lead godly lives as well. Many of the problems in marriages today are a result of Christians neglecting

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their duty to teach their children God's order, the proper roles, and how this is all good and that there are blessings and happiness found in what God gives. Jesus blessed that happy occasion and couple on their wedding day by turning water into wine. Rather than the bridegroom facing the embarrassment of running out of wine before this party and his bride, the Lord gives him new, fresh, good wine. Jesus creates, restores, and makes new. Jesus made his glory known by doing all these things.

Jesus worked a miracle at Cana. Why he changed water into wine is given at the end of the reading, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him." In this first public miracle of Jesus, then, you see the Christ come to his people, his bride, and make himself known. He has come among them to save them as long promised and here he shows and is unpacking what this all means. This is a great Epiphany text, and you can easily see the reason why this has always been a reading during the Epiphany season. For you hearing this today, you see Jesus work and manifest his glory as the Christ for you, his bride.

The glory of Jesus is seen in his whole life and work accomplishing our salvation. He does the glory of the Father by fulfilling the law, suffering, and satisfying the wrath of God against sin for you. This is the glory of the Father and the glory of Jesus. It's the glory of God to save his people; this is his proper work. Here in Cana, he is continuing this work. It's not yet completed as he must go further. He still has more to teach, more to preach, more to fulfill, more to suffer, and he must still die and rise.

The glory of Jesus is ultimately found in his death when his hour had come. In John 12:23 Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." This is where Jesus made himself known in a great Epiphany or revealing for you. Lifted up upon the cross extended bearing your sin his glory is seen as he suffers for your sin and makes peace with the Father by shedding his blood as payment. It boggles your minds, so far as you are sinners, to think of this being the glorious thing of Jesus and the hour that everything was leading up to yet in faith, the Spirit reveals this to you for the glorious event that it is. You see Good Friday as the day your debt was paid, your sin was atoned for, and you were ransomed back to God. That makes it a glorious hour for you indeed.

See who you are dear people of God. You are the bride of Christ. As his glorious bride you listen to what your Lord says. You submit to him as a wife submits to her husband knowing that he is your head and leads you with a sacrificial love suffering even death for your sake and well-being. Like the servants at the wedding feast Mary's words are true, "Do whatever he tells you," for you know that whatever he tells you is true and good. Your life is defined by your glorious bridegroom.

The church errs when she forgets this and think that the Lord submits to her. It's a spiritual feminism when the church think the Lord is subject to her, that she is equal in office to him, and she can lead him. That arrogance is not what it means to be the bride of Christ. This is the sinful and false sense of glory concocted by the devil, the world, and your own fallen flesh. The Lord calls you all to repent lest we perish in hell and to submit to him for he is the Lord. It is to "do what he says" and never close your ears to what he says nor doubt what he says to us in the Scriptures. It is to find him and his glory where he has appointed. It's to know that he is your bridegroom.

The Lord, however, is always faithful. He always has been, always is, and always will be. This is a wonderful thing for you as your bridegroom speaks to you, "your sin is forgiven." The glory of Jesus accomplished is seen in giving you what he has done. You personally have this glory of the Lord. This is a glorious day in baptism, hearing the word of God, and feasting at his Holy Supper.

This means that today is a glorious day as you see the Lord manifesting himself among you and working another miracle in your midst. The Lord has washed away Bristol's sin and given her new life. He has called her out of the darkness and into the light of his church where she has a place at his side forever. She is before you now as a holy child having been cleansed by the washing of the water with the word. It's the same for you as you are the baptized people of God who gather around the word of God, your baptism, and feast at his Supper. In these means even, this very day, the

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Lord is in your midst manifesting himself. In faith you believe and take him at his word and receive what he gives. He has come and accomplished his glory, and you have that glory for you as he forgives your sins, and you have life and salvation.

The glory of Jesus accomplished and given to you now is also for you in the life to come. God promises you, “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, ‘when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.’” The manifesting of Jesus and his glory in this world points you also to the future glory you have. The day will come when you will attend the eternal wedding feast. The wine will never run out at that day and neither with the celebration end. In abundance you will partake of the Lord salvation with all of God’s saints clothed forever with the white wedding garments of salvation washed in the blood of the Lamb who is your bridegroom.

All this glory is for you dear bride of Christ. The hour of Jesus has come, and he has accomplished your salvation. Rejoice this day in the Lord who changed water and to wine. He is the Lord who has created all things, ordered all things, and grants you to dwell in those things in which he gives. Find joy in the Lord’s institution and estates rejoicing in the one who is the Giver of the gifts. Look to Christ, your head, who laid down his life for you on the cross shedding his blood so that you now have peace with God. Feast at his banquet here as he gives you that same blood hidden in wine. Look forward to that day to come when the wine will never run out but will be choicest wine poured out into your cup as you sit with your Lord and his saints as that never ending feast. That will be a glorious day where his glory is fully made known to you face to face. That’s a day of unending glory and where the wine will never run out. Thanks be to God for his gifts, his order, his redemption, and the future glory to come. He alone has done wondrous things. Behold this sign, this miracle, believe in Jesus as his disciples and see his glory before you today and rejoice now and forever.

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