

Second Sunday after Epiphany 2025
John 2:1-11 (ESV)

“This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.”

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

Blessings to all of you, dear ones, on this second Sunday of Epiphany. And truly, how blessed we are today, once again, to hear and to drink in with delight all that our Lord did at the wedding of Cana and what He’s set out to do thereafter in manifesting His glory.

There they all were at Cana in Galilee—a bridegroom and his beloved bride, all the family and friends of the newlyweds from their village and the surrounding area, and, of course, the Lord Jesus Himself—the very Author of marriage—was in attendance—the One Who established it from the beginning to be the one flesh union of a man and his wife all the days of their life together.

Our Lord designed and intended for marriage to be a fruitful union, one of reciprocal love and mutual support between husband and wife, a union from which the blessing of many children would naturally come forth from the intimacy of their embrace, and one in which husband and wife would ultimately serve as a living icon in married life, a sacred image of Christ’s own marriage with His beloved bride, the Church.

Dear ones, marriage is a most holy, and blessed estate well-pleasing to Him and must surely, then, be well-loved and treasured by us too as a great gift of God, which He’s given out of His great love for mankind.

Suffice it to say, then, our Lord was very much interested in being present at the wedding in Cana, just as He was for the marriage of Adam and Eve in the beginning, and as He is for each of our marriages today as well, even when things begin to go wrong, even terribly wrong.

In our text, we find that during the course of the nuptial banquet, the wine ran out. And for this to happen in an ancient, Middle-Eastern wedding, you better believe this was a huge problem, with so much at stake.

This was much worse than running out of hotdogs at a fourth of July cookout, or hosting a Super Bowl watch party and having the TV go out right after the kickoff. It was much worse.

Because in the ancient Near-East, weddings were put on and paid for by the bridegroom and his family. And even today, in that culture, people often consider the wedding a sign of how much the groom’s family loves and values their son and his new wife.

In that culture, weddings are a community event which naturally leads to a community’s verdict on the new marriage and the importance of the families involved.

So, when people deem a wedding to be bad or cheap, they remember the shame of it all for a very long time. You know how people are. They gossip and they come to think that if the groom’s own family doesn’t respect the new couple enough to put on a great wedding with

enough wine to keep everyone happy, there must be some reason for it; there must be some serious flaw, some sin or vice in the groom or his new bride they don't approve of. And therefore, the couple may well be treated as outcasts, shut out from polite society, missing out on things like job opportunities, promotions, and any number of other things.

So, when the wine runs out at the wedding in our text for today, dear ones, and the word gets out, the bridegroom and his bride are left exposed in shame at their own wedding in front of everyone, for all to see.

Can you see, then, the desperation and urgency of the blessed Virgin mother of our Lord when she pleads with Him saying, "They have no wine"? It's as if she were saying, "Please, take it upon Yourself to act. Cover their shame in full and restore them anew!"

Can you imagine the insults and the mockery of the bridegroom? "Behold the man who ran out of wine at his own wedding! Shame! Shame!"

Maybe you can relate to what the new couple must've felt in that moment, what must've been going through their minds: "What are we going to do now? How can we hope to recover from this?"

It's the kind of situation that just makes you want to run and hide and do whatever you can to make it all go away, like Adam and Eve did early on in their marriage, when their eyes were opened, and they experienced the shame of their sin in the Garden.

They couldn't even bear to *look* at one another and be reminded of the evil they did *with* one another and *to* one another. So, they took it upon themselves to cover their shame, desperately sewing a few fig leaves together, and hoping in vain that that would suffice.

They could no longer bear to look the Lord God in the face either. Having betrayed Him and forsaken His command, they fled from Him as from an enemy and they hid themselves from Him, once again hoping in vain to stay out of sight and out of mind.

This is what sinners do in their shame. They need the Lord to restore them and atone for their sins and to cover their shame as only He can. That's what we need—whether you're married or not.

But you may remember that after Adam and Eve fell into sin in the Garden, the Lord came near in the cool of the day and soon enough, the Lord God took the life of an innocent creature and made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. He took it upon Himself to cover their shame, He preached the Gospel to them, and He restored them to Him and to each other as husband and wife anew.

And all of this points forward to the time when the Son of God would leave His Father's throne to become one flesh with His bride, the Church—when He would take up His own duties as our divine Bridegroom, bearing our sin and shame, and pour out His own life in His blood to be the new wine for our nuptial banquet with Him, to restore us and make all things new.

It's why, in our text, Jesus responds the way He does to His mother. His response matches the intensity of her plea. He says, "Woman, what is there between you and me? My hour has not yet come."

And when He says this, He speaks of the hour when He would begin to endure all the suffering of His Passion for our salvation. Soon enough, the hour would come for Jesus to be stripped, bruised, and bloodied, for Him to be left completely exposed and mocked and for Pontius Pilate to say before His crucifixion, "Behold the man!"

That hour for Christ to be lifted up in glory would arrive soon enough.

But until then, and starting with what He did at the wedding of Cana, Jesus *began* to manifest His glory. Changing water into wine, He took away the gloom of the bride and groom that day. He restored them to their community anew and changed their shame into honor, their sadness into great joy.

Dear ones, Christ Jesus makes all things new. In Him, the sick shall be healed; the blind shall receive their sight; even the dead shall be raised.

And can you not trust Jesus to restore you from the shame of your sins, and from whatever shame has befallen you in your marriages? None who look to Him shall be put to shame. So come to Him in prayer like His mother did; cling to Him in faith; and know that He will act at a time and in a way He knows is best. And in the meantime, know that He's with you and will not abandon you.

Dear ones, drink deeply today of our Lord's words and His works and of the chalice set before you, a foretaste of the marriage feast to come, the blessings of which will never run out.

To Christ be all the glory forever and ever. Amen.