

Weddings. I still remember the day, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1982. Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. I traveled to the church, St. Peter's Lutheran Church with my brother Bert. My brother Bert, 15 years older than I am, was my best man, and my chauffeur. My father-in-law let us borrow his Lincoln Continental Town car for the day. Wow. I felt really first class traveling in such a fine automobile. We had tied cans to the back end of the car. My wife to be, Jeanne, had done extensive planning for this wedding. We were confident that everything would run smoothly. However, that was not the case. My two ushers that were supposed to hand out bulletins had a flat tire as they traveled from Algoma, Wisconsin to Sturgeon Bay. As a result, a couple of other groomsmen had to fill in as ushers and pull the runner down the aisle right before the service. At about 1 minute before the service started, my ushers arrive on the scene.

Then, at the reception, at Leathem Smith Lodge, the owner wanted to do something special for us, so he brought out cinnamon rolls in addition to the wedding cake. My wife was upset in having cinnamon rolls brought out so she made the owner take them back. In addition, my father-in-law wanted to have an open bar all night, it was a way of demonstrating wealth, and being gracious, but we said we only wanted it for one hour to set an example. We didn't want a bunch of people getting drunk at a future minister's wedding. For music, we had one of my classmates play a guitar for a while. We didn't even have a band. Again, we were overly concerned with setting a good example.

As you look back at your wedding day, or a wedding you have attended, did everything run smoothly? Or can you think of glitches that occurred? Today, we are going to travel to a wedding in Cana. We are going to see a glitch that occurred in the festivities, but how Jesus came to the rescue. When you invite Jesus to your wedding, rest assured, "No Need Is Left Unmet".

When a wedding takes place today, it is usually a 3 day outing. You have the reception on Friday, the wedding on Saturday, and on Sunday, the guests have a brunch at the hotel, before heading home. But in the days of Jesus, did you know that weddings lasted for 7 days. I have trouble with company staying over for 3 days, but 7 days. In addition, you had to feed that group food every day, and have plenty of wine on hand.

Like Jeanne and I had a glitch with ushers getting a flat tire, and cinnamon rolls being served for dessert, this wedding also had a glitch. For some reason, they ran out of wine. Wine was crucial, not for drunkenness, but for what it demonstrated. The presence of wine stated that this was a special day and that all the guests were special guests. It was considered an insult to the guests if the host ran out of food or wine.

How could this happen? Remember these wedding celebrations went on for up to a week. Maybe the couple was poor and could not afford enough wine. Maybe the disciples and Jesus were unexpected guests that they hadn't counted on. Whatever the reason, Mary comes to Jesus, expecting him to do something about it. She says to Jesus, "They have no more wine". Jesus responds back, "Why do you involve me in this? My time has not yet come!"

In the kindest possible way Jesus wants his mother to know that he was in control. He knows the best time to step in and help people and show them his glory. I fear there is a little bit of Mary in all of us. We tend to think that we know the best timing for the Lord to show us his glory rather than leaving things in his hands.

As I was working through this I thought back to a time in my life when I thought

the Lord's timing was not right for my personal life. I wondered why my classmates were married and why I was still single. It isn't easy being single when you are in the ministry. I asked the Lord to help me find someone. The Lord did not answer my prayer immediately. He said my time has not yet come. But then he allowed me to meet Jeanne during my 7<sup>th</sup> year of studies, my vicar year. He allowed me to see his glory not only in his presence at our wedding day but also his presence throughout our married life.

I also recalled being troubled when a 22 year old Lutheran school teacher named Jo Jo Behrens, who loved children, got sick with a killer strep in the Chicago area,, and died within a week. It was a very difficult funeral. But God's ways are not our ways. His plan was to have Jo Jo see Jesus in all his glory long before I did.

What I like about Mary is that she took the problem to Jesus before she took it to anyone else. She trusted Jesus and knew that He would help her with her problems. What causes us to think of prayer to Jesus as the last option rather than the first? I can think of two reasons: feelings of independence and insignificance. Sometimes we're independent. We can handle our own life. We will use our power and resources to get us out of this mess. We want to handle life our way. But through the troubles that come our way, God wants to show us the world is broken, out of sync with Him. God wants us to recognize in our troubles in life, how desperately we need Him.

Another reason why we may not run first to Jesus for help is that we feel insignificant. We think, "Sure, Mary can take her problems to Jesus. She's his mother. He doesn't want to hear my problems. I mean, he's got a universe to run. He's got planets to keep balances and presidents and kings to watch over. He's got wars to deal with and famines to fix. Who am I to tell him about my problems?"

I'm glad you asked. Let me tell you who you are. You are an heir of God and co-heir with Christ. You are eternal like an angel. You have a crown that will last forever. You are a holy priest, a treasured possession. You were chosen before the creation of the world. You are destined for praise, fame, and honor, and you will be a holy people to the Lord your God. But more than any of the above-more significant than any title or position-is the simple fact that you are God's child. The Bible says in I John, O the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what you are. That's why Jesus, the Son of God came. He came to restore us to the family of God. He came so we could once again be children of God.

Jesus performed this first miracle for the same reason he performed all of his miracles. Sure, he was showing us that it's good to have compassion or that we should help the poor and the sick and weak. But that's not why Jesus performed miracles. Jesus performed miracles to back up his message. Jesus performed miracles to prove who he was. Jesus performed miracles to authenticate his claims to be the promised Messiah and the Son of God.

We all know what it's like to feel like Mary did at this wedding. She seems to be so consumed by the physical need for wine at this wedding that she apparently lost track of the real reason Jesus had come. It's interesting that no one asked Jesus to officiate at this wedding. We don't hear of anyone asking him to say a prayer or give a blessing. We don't hear about Jesus delivering a message of encouragement from Scripture to the newlyweds. It would appear that Jesus was simply asked to attend as a friend. But then when they ran out of wine (oh no, end of the world), then they sought out Jesus and his divine help.

We've been there before. We get so busy. We have places to go, people to see, things to do. Even in retirement in the Villages our schedule can become full with activity after activity.

But then we get sick. Then our relative gets cancer. We find ourselves in dire financial straights. So we turn to Jesus. Now don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with looking to Jesus for help with the problems we face in this world. But why do we so often only remember Jesus when we really need him? Why do we so often only have time for Jesus when we want something from him? If I had a nickel for every time on my evangelism visits someone has told me, "Well things are going well right now, I don't really need the church," or "I'm pretty busy and don't have time for church," or I hear the same message every week, I know what Jesus is about, so I'll come once in a while to worship him at church.

Yet that's why Jesus came in the first place. He came because we are sinners who are selfish, and so busy with our own personal recreation and pleasure. He came because we have fallen short of his glory. He came because we often let other things become more important in our lives. He came because we needed him to save us. How reassuring, then, is the Gospel today! Today we see Jesus show he has awesome *power*. ***I mean he turned 6, 30 gallon jars filled to the brim with water to wine. That's 180 gallons of wine.*** If Jesus has power to turn water into wine to prove He is God, then suddenly his death on the cross has much more meaning. This wasn't some nice guy who made a nice gesture by dying on a cross. This was the Son of God on the cross. This was the Son of God who came to rescue his people from their sins. This was the Son of God who came to crush Satan and destroy death. And if the Son of God died on that cross, then surely he was able to carry our sins. Then surely his death grants forgiveness and salvation. Then surely his promise of eternal life will come true.

My friends, Jesus has the power to help us in our everyday lives. (No, I'm not saying that if you run out of drinks during your Super Bowl party you should pray really hard and then Jesus will turn your water into Pepsi and Yyling or some stones into chips and chicken wings.)

But Jesus does and will listen to things you ask for according to his will. Jesus promised, **"I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."** So if you want stronger faith, if you want wisdom, if you want a better understanding of the Bible, if you want more patience, if you want to be filled with more love—Jesus will give you those things. When you are in constant contact with him and his Word, Jesus has shown he has the power to give you those very things. He has the power to help. He has the power to heal. He has the power to give strength and courage. Today we see Jesus that he can help us with any and every need in our lives.

So go ahead. Tell Jesus what hurts. Talk to Him. He won't turn you away. He won't think it's silly. Let us approach his throne with confidence. He is the Son of God. He is the Messiah. Bring Your Needs to Jesus. He will supply you with what you need for the situation, even more than you ask for. Amen.