

“WHEN WAS YOUR WATER INTO WINE MOMENT?”

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Tuesday mornings are one of my sacred times of the week, when I now meet usually with two pastors and a lay member who we all know, whose insight and questions always challenge us. Two weeks ago, Pastor Dow mentioned that as he thought about the gospel lesson that we have this week, where Jesus turned the water into wine: “When was your water into wine moment?” I have not been able to get that question out of my mind ever since.

Last Tuesday as we, Reverend Blaker, Tom, and I sat around the table, and as the gospel was read, I questioned, what was the significance of **“on the third day”**? So, we looked at what preceded these verses in chapter 1, and this is what we discovered. Following Jesus’ baptism, John pointed Jesus out in front of some of his disciples. On the next day following Jesus’ baptism, John again pointed Jesus out saying, **“Look, here is the Lamb of God!”** At this point, two of John’s disciples left to follow Jesus, one of which was Andrew. Andrew went and told his brother, Simon Peter, who then also followed Jesus. On the next day, or second day, we have the encounter between Philip and Nathanael, who also followed Jesus, even though Nathanael at first did not think anything good could come out of Nazareth. That brings us to the third day where we find Jesus, his mother, and disciples at the wedding in Cana.

Weddings at this time were special events, much more than what they are today. Yes, there are some very elaborate weddings that take place today, but at this time, a wedding celebration could last up to seven days. So, the fact that they ran out of wine was something that would be remembered for years to come, and might even be felt to mark the couple’s marriage that they would not have joy in their years ahead.

Now, how Mary found out that the wine had given out we do not know, but she did, and she went to Jesus, and wanted him to solve the problem. His response was not one of taking charge and saying I will take care of this right away. No, instead his answer to her was, it is no concern to us, and my hour has not come. His response did not stop Mary though, I guess you could say, mother knows best. Now, Mary does not go back to Jesus and tell him he must take care of this problem. No, instead she goes to the servants and tells them to do anything Jesus instructs them to do. Well, we know the end of the story of course Jesus quietly instructs them to put water in all those purification jugs and after doing that, take a cup to the chief steward to sample it. Low and behold, it is no longer water, but the very best wine. End of story! The party went on without anybody the wiser as to how the best wine was saved for last. That is for those who attended the festivities, but the servants knew and those ordinary people I would say, talked to other servants and eventually the word got out.

Yes, Jesus turning the water into wine was the of first what are called signs in the gospel of John, or what are called miracles in the other gospels, but not the last. This first sign or miracle was a beginning and a reminder of what having God in your midst means for life. It is about joy, relationships, faith, trust, hope, basic needs, and abundance.

So, what does all of that have to do with my intrigue of Pastor Dows question from two weeks ago as we talked briefly about this lesson of: “What was your water into wine moment in your life?”

Jesus was, what I would say, reluctant to do anything about the shortage of wine. We do not know if he thought that his time had not come yet for more to understand who he was or that he did not think that is what he had been sent to do.

Think about that question for a minute. “What was your water into wine moment in your life?” When was it that someone encouraged you to do something that you did not feel you were qualified to do or had the ability to do, yet they kept encouraging you?

I remember that I was chosen in junior high school to attend a one-day event held at the YWCA in Minneapolis. It had a title of something like, Young Women Leaders or Potential Women Leader. I had no idea, and still do not, who singled me out to attend that day and I could not tell you anything about what was presented that day. Yet, I have never forgotten that someone saw something within me that I did not see, and to be perfectly honest somedays I still do not see within myself.

Yes, I would say that at one time or another each one of us has been chosen, encouraged, challenged to do something that we do not feel we were able or ready to accomplish. Was it our lack of self-confidence, or was it a result of a higher-order influence? Nevertheless, it surely became our “water into wine” moment. Oh, we may not do something as miraculous as Jesus did by providing an over abundance of wine at a wedding. Where he brought joy not only to the family members of the couple, the couple, and all those who were celebrating their new relationship. Although when this happens to us, it might just be the first of many things that we do that will make a difference for someone else or many people. It is about what Paul wrote to the Corinthians about having spiritual gifts, that they are given to us by the Spirit. No, we are not all given the same gifts, but we are all given gifts to benefit the common good. Our gifts may change as well as we find ourselves in different circumstances or our abilities change with age. We are always being challenged and there have been and will continue to be water into wine moments in our lives. We just need to believe we are the servants filling the jugs with water, and we become a part of the glory of the Lord.

Yes, Jesus was at the very beginning of his ministry when this sign took place, and there would be more to follow, as he gathered with people on his journey. At this point very few knew much about Jesus or who he truly was, but the one who did know...his mother...knew that his time had come. His time had come in Cana of Galilee, for his

glory was revealed, and his disciples believed in him, and we too have come to believe and share in his revealed glory. Amen.