

Epiphany III

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[0 : 0 0] This morning we have the account of the first miracle of our Lord done in the region of the Gentiles. The wedding at Cana is a perfect text for epiphany, as it manifests, as it reveals our Lord as the long-awaited Messiah and King who comes for his people.

But this text also speaks of the profound love of Christ for his church, and it calls each one of us to live as a faithful bride in obedience, in submission to our great God and King.

But there's something a bit odd about the story this morning from John chapter 2. Did you notice that there's no mention of the bride? And there's only a passing comment from the bridegroom at the very end here in John chapter 2.

The reason why this account reads the way it does is because St. John is demonstrating how Jesus is the real bridegroom.

He is the focal point of this story, and Mary serves as a portrait of the church. As her response is to be our attitude towards our Savior and our bridegroom.

[1 : 3 1] Now, I know that's a very bold statement. But this is the way that the fathers of the church have understood this text. So let's put this hypothesis to the test.

Most people are familiar with the story of Jesus turning water into wine. But let's review what our Lord did here in Cana. Jesus is at a wedding when suddenly the wine runs out.

Mary then takes charge of the situation. She asks our Lord to do something about this problem, this embarrassment. She intercedes on behalf of the couple.

And Jesus refers to his mother as woman. Not a sign of disrespect. A title given to Eve in the garden. But this title woman also demonstrates that there is a change in relationship between Jesus and his mother.

Our Lord says, my hour has not yet come. And he was speaking to that time when he would institute the cup of the new covenant, the new testament.

[2 : 4 7] Which is his very own blood. Mary then tells the disciples to do exactly what Jesus tells them.

And eventually Jesus takes water. He turns it into wine with an enormous excess of the finest wine that has ever touched the palate of these guests.

Now I'm not trying to run through the story here. But what our Lord is doing here at Cana is he is demonstrating that there is a greater wedding. That is actually taking place before their very eyes.

Jesus is the promised bridegroom. He is gathering his church, his bride, from all nations of the world.

Our Lord is fulfilling the words of the old covenant. About the promise of when the Messiah, the bridegroom, comes. In Isaiah chapter 54 verse 5 we read.

[3 : 5 0] For your maker is your husband. For your maker or your creator is your husband. The Lord of hosts is his name.

And your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. He is called the God of the whole earth. In Isaiah chapter 62 verse 5 we read.

For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you. And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Jesus is the God and the bridegroom who has now come for his bride. Again, made up of people not just from Israel, but people from all nations.

So what will this God, who is the husband of his people, do when he comes? In Amos chapter 9 verse 13 we read.

[4 : 52] Behold, behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes, him who so see. The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.

The mountains and the hills speak of the vast scope of our Lord's people who are now being gathered together. Which obviously includes the Gentiles.

In Joel chapter 3 verse 18 we read. And it will come to pass in that day, in that day, the day that the Messiah comes. That the mountains shall drip with new wine.

Jesus is now manifesting himself as the creator and the God who has come to enter into the most intimate human relationship possible.

As the bridegroom. And the husband of his bride. His church. Made up of people of all nations.

[6 : 03] So we have seen how Jesus fulfills the promise. That the Messiah would be the husband. The one that extends an abundance of wine.

Not just any wine. The best wine. To his people, the bride. Now we notice Mary. And Mary is the portrait. She is the personification.

She is the representation of the church. But let me ask you a question. In our reading at the very beginning.

When did this miracle take place? Well, we read in John chapter 2. Very first verse. It was on the third day.

The third day. We know the significance of the third day. Especially as it relates to the resurrection. Numbers have significance. But Moses.

[7 : 01] But Moses. But Moses. We read. Received the law. Of God. And ascended on Mount Sinai. On. The third day.

And we read. That the people of Israel. Affirmed their covenant fidelity. And their faithfulness to God. As they swore. According to Exodus. Chapters 19 and 24.

And listen. They said. We will do everything. The Lord has commanded us. That was their promise. That was their vow. That they took to God.

Sadly. Those words were not followed. With faithful actions. As a matter of fact. One entire book of the Bible. Depicts how. The people of God.

Strayed. Like a harlot. Committing spiritual adultery. Against their creator. Their maker. And this book of course.

[8 : 00] Is the book of Hosea. And Hosea the prophet. Was to marry a harlot. Named Gomer. And she was not faithful.

Time and time again. But now. On the third day. Now. On the third day. Jesus appears. At a wedding.

Where the wine. Has dropped. Dried up. And Mary. Tells the disciples. To do. Whatever. Our Lord. Tells them. Mary.

The one. Who said. Behold. The handmaiden. Of the Lord. Let it be done. To me. According to thy word. When the angel. Gabriel.

- Announced. That she would conceive. And give birth to a son. And call him. Jesus. Mary. Is now. The one. Who pleads. On behalf.
- [8 : 55] Of this wedding couple. At Cana. She takes charge. She intercedes. She pleads. Mary. Mary. Mary. Is unlike. Adam and Eve.
- Or Israel. She did not seek. To do her own thing. She was trying. To bring everything. In conformity. To the word. Of God. She gave herself.
- Fully. To her bridegroom. And sought to help. Not hinder. This great wedding feast. Mary. Did not break. Covenant. But was devoted. And obedient.
- To God. And Mary. Demonstrates. What our devotion. Should be. As well. We are called. To emulate. Mary's. Faithfulness. By adhering. To the will. Of God. In our lives. In all things. We are called.
- [9 : 48] To ask. And pray. On behalf. Of our neighbors. So that God's. New wine. His spirit. Might be poured. Out. In abundance. So others.
- Might share. In this. Sacred. Covenantal. Love. And family. The church. We are to be people. Who say yes. To God. Like Mary. And do everything.
- He commands. Or at least. That should be. Our desire. Why? Because our Lord. Desires. To rescue us.
- From the jaws. Of the seduction. Of this world. He desires. To call us. Back. To himself. He calls us.
- Into the greatest. Intimacy. Of Christ's love. Where new. Wine. Flows. In abundance. And where new life.
- [10 : 42] Has true purpose. And meaning. In a world. Where there is no purpose. And no meaning. And this love. Is for all people. It's for all people.
- No matter what age. Race. Or social status. Because Christ. Came to offer himself. So that we might. Drink of his cup. And receive his life.
- His love. And his care. And his protection. For all eternity. This is what the bridegroom. Came to do. Jesus is the great bridegroom.
- Who brings joy. And hope. Mary epitomizes the church. Or what the church is called. To be. And to do. A faithful. And willing spouse.
- Who strives. Strives in all things. To do. The will. Of God. There's no battle. Of the sexes here. Because bride and bridegroom.
- [11 : 39] Act. In selfless. Harmony. Giving. And sharing. For the sake. Of the other. And this unity. Should direct. The way we interact.
- With our spouses. With our co-workers. In the life. Of our parish. Here at St. Philip's. Not acting out of self-preservation. Or arrogance. Or in a way.
- That looks down on others. But being a faithful bride. To our God. And looking out. For the good. Of his children.
- The church. That we belong to. That we share. In this love. Given to us. Through Christ Jesus. Amen.
- In the name of the Father. And of the Son. And of the Holy Ghost. That we came ■■■■■ below. That we're going to bring. Ladies and gentlemen. Okay. Thank you. Thanks for coming every time. You're welcome. I'm going to bring him up. Thank you. We went. Thank you.
- [12 : 33] Thank you. Thank you.