



## Sermon

Fr. Jeff Wylie  
Rector, Christ's Church, Greensburg, Pennsylvania

January 20, 2019

---

When I was growing up, my favorite sandwich was a Steak-umm sandwich. Oh, I thought nothing could be better! In high school, I found out that a Steak-umm covered in caramelized onions was even better. And then there was the time I nearly burned the house down catching the butter in the pan on fire! That sandwich was flame-broiled, and it was AWESOME. That is until I went to Philadelphia and had a true authentic Philly Cheese Steak. WOW, I realized how inadequate Steak-umm sandwiches are to me now. It is interesting how experiencing something new and unprecedented redefines or reveals to us a new understanding.

In this season of Epiphany or the season of Jesus revealing Himself to us, we encounter Jesus at the wedding feast in Cana which is about six to eight miles north of Nazareth. Here is recorded the first of seven signs in the book of John. John uses signs instead of miracles as it is a miracle that attests to Jesus' identity as Messiah and Son of God which brings an unbeliever to faith. The question we must ask is why did John choose this event as the first act of Jesus? Remember in Matthew's Gospel, it is the sermon on the mount; for Mark, it is an exorcism; and for Luke, it is a return to his hometown.

The most obvious theme of this passage is abundance. The six stone jars mentioned in this passage held 20-30 gallons each! The story also describes not only the quantity but how superior the transformed wine became in quality. "Wine" in ancient times never meant was a reference to

---

drunkenness but to God's blessings instead. The symbolism for running out of wine shows a spiritual barrenness. The wedding planner had done a poor job to run out of the wine. Those who were to safeguard the spirituality of God's people also did a poor job. Jesus brings an overabundance of wine, of very fine wine. Why bring out the best wine after the inferior wine? Why bring such blessings to those who are not worthy? Interesting that Isaiah 25:1-6 discusses about the abundance of wine, very fine wine, well refined at the wedding feast of the Lord.

The wine takes on another significance, and we see two hints here as well. When Mary asked Jesus to do something, Jesus' response was it is not my time, i.e., it is not my time to be crucified. Interesting how Mary is there to see Jesus' first act and then at the foot of the cross to watch Him be crucified as His last act. The fact of not naming Mary rather Jesus calling her woman (a polite term) and John calling her the Mother of Jesus, which shows there is more, much more here.

The story is not about Jesus' biological family. The wedding feast of Cana is the about revealing who is Jesus as our Messiah and Son of God. It is not that Mary was insignificant in Jesus' life, as she is present both hear and at the foot of the cross. Rather, she is insignificant in the story. Her being mother has significance that Jesus took on flesh, but the significance of calling her woman does not demean His relationship with His mother. Instead, it raises us as brothers and sisters in Christ. The significance of a wedding feast cannot be overlooked as well.

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. At this wedding, Jesus turned water into wine. We know then from the Last Supper that Jesus turns wine into His blood. The image of abundance and joy comes from His blood. The death on the Cross, is Jesus' blood being the very blood that gives us redemption and admission to the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*. That heavenly banquet which Isaiah talks about in Chapter 25. It is unmistakable who John uses the imagery of marriage and Jesus is the bridegroom.

One glaring example is John 14:1-6: "I go to prepare a place for you, where I go, you cannot come. I will return so that you may be where I am. You know the way." It is very much like a bridegroom leaving to prepare a home for his wife to live in the rest of their days. The bride is the Church, the ones who drank of the blood of the Lamb. The crucifixion as Jesus

said, "It is finished," referring that he paid it all, all for us so that when He is raised from the dead, we too are raised, He came back to us! But we are getting ahead of ourselves, for His hour has not yet come at the wedding of Cana.

So what was the real miracle of this story? It comes at the end of our story when Jesus performed this sign: the miracle of the disciples believing Him to be the Messiah. What Jesus did at this wedding was unprecedented; what He does for us as our bridegroom, is also totally unprecedented. HE SAVES US. See this sign and believe—let this miracle upon build your faith. Jesus Christ was sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast, a feast where no Steak-umms are found, but the wonderful banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN