

I invite you to open your Bibles to this morning's scripture text, which can be found in the book of John, Chapter 2 verses 1-12. This can be found on page ___ in your pew Bibles. We continue in our series "Captured by Love." Scripture reveals that Love brings opportunity.

Our Fathers Word

- John 2:1-10

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

This, the first of his miraculous signs Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

The Word of God for the people of God

As we are captured by God's Love, growing as Christ's ministers, learning to be his disciples of love, we are being transformed into the very essence of love through Jesus Christ's presence in our lives. Love beget love. God is Love, Christ is Love, YOU ARE LOVE. No longer are we people sitting idly by, grasping to keep ahold of God's love selfishly doing nothing with it. We are divinely driven to GO, to keep God's love flowing, to give away our Love through our *acts* of love. Within those loving acts you *bring* with you the opportunity God created for the world. Love brings opportunity.

Let us *never lose focus* of that wonderful and amazing gift of God's grace that is the love of Jesus Christ. The love that defines all other love. The soul saving love brought as an opportunity for the world to *know, believe, and live*.

For what you bring to the world is the what Jesus Christ brings to us; the way, the truth, and the life, bringing God's loving presence, Christ in us, into all the lives we interact with. A way to experience in all things, the incredible love that is the love of Christ. A way for you to believe, to have faith, that Christ is the Messiah, our living God. A way to life eternal with God.

What this series "captured by love" will highlight, as we move through the Gospel of John together, is largely governed by John 1:14—"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have *seen* his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." John writes his personal witness, that *is this* Gospel, so that *we today* could be included in that amazing privilege "We have *seen* his glory." The glory of the incarnate Son of God. Love brings this opportunity.

Seeing the Messiah's glory has huge effects.

One effect is found in Jn 1:16 “And *from his fullness* we have *all* received, grace upon grace.”

When God gives us eyes to see the glory of Jesus—his beauty and greatness and worth—that *seeing* is a river of life, as it were, along which *great grace* streams into our lives. Grace to love. Grace to rejoice. Grace to live forevermore.

For every text revealed in *this* Gospel through our series, our prayer should be: Show me your glory. Grant me your grace. Show me more of the greatness of Christ and grant me more likeness to Christ.

In this morning’s scripture, love brings opportunity from another effect of seeing Christ’s glory, an effect that confirms that we are on the right track when we think and pray this way.

After the story of the wedding of Cana in John 2:1–10, John says in verse 11, “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.” So here John puts the focus again on seeing the glory of Christ. His disciples saw his glory, (here’s the effect) and they believed in him.

This manifesting of his glory is an attribute of God. The divine glory and presence of God that first dwelt in the old tabernacle was now residing in the person of Jesus. That same glory of God resides in you with Christ in your heart. We bring the opportunity for others to see that glory. You bring with you, in your loving acts, a witness that reveals to the world, seeing the glory of Christ, so they believe. That’s why John is writing this Gospel. He wants to reveal the glory of Christ the Messiah to us. And he wants us to receive the grace of believing. God’s opportunity.

The definition of manifest according to Webster's dictionary ; readily perceived by the eye or the understanding; evident; obvious; apparent; plain.

Being so captured by love that the glory of Jesus's Love *manifests* for the world to see in and through you. A love that is *readily perceived by the eye or the understanding* helping them believe. A love that reveals the glory of God, *evident* through your loving acts. An *obvious* love that gives Jesus the glory. A love that is *apparent* to all. A love that makes it so *plain*, that seeing is believing.

There are several examples of the glory of Christ being revealed in this story of the wedding of Cana for us to see, so that we will believe. The glory of an obedient Son, the glory of an ultimate Purifier, and the glory of an all-providing Bridegroom.

The Glory of an Obedient Son is revealed as Jesus exalts his (**raise hands**) *Sonship to the heavenly Father*, above his (**lower hands**) sonship to his earthly mother. Calling him an obedient Son refers to the Son of his heavenly Father, not the son of his earthly mother. I'm quite certain he was obedient to his earthly mother, but that is not the point here. Jesus' words are intentionally chosen to reveal an allegiance to God's will above his mother's will—and above all human attachments and affections.

John 2:1–4: On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."

That is a surprising response. I think Jesus knew it would be surprising when he said it, and John knew it would be when he recorded it. There was nothing cultural that says a man can't call his mother by the title "Mother"—"Mother, what does this have to do with me?" But Jesus says, "Woman." His response isn't disrespectful, but it is abrupt. It may be like calling her "Ma'am" in some contexts today.

This seems blunt not only because Jesus calls her "Woman," or "Ma'am," but also because he says, "What does this have to do with me?" That phrase (ti emoi kai soi) is used five other times in the New Testament, and every time it is spoken by a demon to Jesus. When Jesus intrudes in their domain and starts to exert power where they were in control, they say, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God?" (Matthew 8:29). The gist of this phrase seems to be: "I don't want you pressing in here. You shouldn't be coming to me like this. This is not your affair."

So Jesus is doubly abrupt with his mother: He calls her "Woman," and he says, "This is not your place to be calling out my power." It does seem that his mother expected him to do something. We are not told what she expected, but we are told that Jesus did not approve of what she said.

What makes this so significant is that Jesus goes right ahead and takes care of the problem by doing a miracle. He could have said very gently, "Yes, Mother, I know. I'll take care of it immediately." That's what he did, but that's not what he said. That makes us ask why he spoke to her this way. If you are going to do what your mother has in mind anyway, why don't you simply agree with her and then do it? Why the rough words?

I think the answer is that Jesus felt a burden to make clear not only to his mother and his brothers and sisters, but to all the rest of us, that because of who he was, physical relationships on earth would not control him or oblige him. His mother and his physical family would have no special advantage to guide his ministry. And his mother and physical family would have no special advantage to receive his salvation.

The reason is that Jesus was absolutely bound to his Father's will in heaven and to no one on earth. There could be no competing controls on his life. John 8:28: "I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me." John 5:17–19: "My Father is working until now, and I am working. . . . [T]he Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." His miracles are not at his mother's disposal—or anyone else's. He is entirely in the sway of his heavenly Father. He and the Father are one, and they have one will.

Jesus had to work against the assumption of his day that his physical family had an inside track of influence and blessing. Once there was a "woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!' But he said, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!'" (Luke 11:27–28). In other words, people thought there would be a special spiritual advantage in being the mother of Jesus, but Jesus cut off that assumption, and focused attention not on physical relations, but spiritual relations.

Or another time the people called to him while he was speaking in a house: "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.' And he answered them,

‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers!’” (Mark 3:32–34). In other words, followers, not family, have a saving relationship with Jesus. And the pathway into Christ’s favor is faith, not family.

This is very good news for us. It doesn’t matter what family line we come from. Your parents may be the most ungodly people you know. That will not keep you from the favor of Jesus. Faith, not family, makes you his friend.

So first we see the glory of an obedient Son. We also see the glory of an Ultimate Purifier. There is a reason Jesus chooses to use water jars that were appointed for “purification,” not for drinking, when he performs his miracle and fills them with wine. And the reason, is that he means to point to his *own death* as the *ultimate purification* for sins that would nullify and replace the Jewish purification rituals.

Here are the indicators. First, Jesus says to his mother at the end of verse 4, “My hour has not yet come.” What is “his hour”? His hour is the hour of his death when he will die for sinners and make purification for sins. Jesus’ hour was the hour of his death when the Lamb of God would take away the sin of the world. This would be the ultimate purification, as John said in 1 John 1:7, “the blood of Jesus his Son purifies us from all sin”

The second indicator is that even though Jesus rebuffed his mother’s request by saying “my hour has not yet come,” he goes ahead and does the miracle. So what Jesus is doing here is saying, “No, the climactic hour of my death is not yet here, but I will give you a sign of my death. I will give you an acted out parable of my death and what it will mean.”

The third indicator is that Jesus tells the servants to fill the purification jars with water. These were not used for drinking. They were used for bathing—for purifying. So it seems that Jesus wants to say that this is what “my hour” will be like: “I will take the purification rituals of Israel and replace them with a decisively new way of purification—namely, with my blood.” And keep in mind that in John 6:55, Jesus said, “My blood is true drink.” “Unless you . . . drink [the] blood [of the Son of Man], you have no life in you” (John 6:53).

So the second way that Jesus manifests his glory in this story is by giving a sign—an acted out parable—of how his own death, his own blood, his hour—will be the final, decisive, ultimate purification for sins. There is no ritual any more for cleansing. There is one way to be clean before God. John says it plainly in Revelation 7:14, “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” The glory of Jesus is that he alone, once and for all, made purification for sins. You don’t turn to ritual. You turn to Jesus.

So we see the glory of an obedient Son, we see the glory of an Ultimate Purifier, we also see the glory of an All-Providing Bridegroom. In John 3:29–30, John the Baptist speaks one last time about the superiority of Jesus. He says, “The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

The last thing John says about Jesus in this Gospel is that he is the bridegroom who has the bride, his growing band of disciples. And the first miracle Jesus does is to complete what the bridegroom at a wedding could not do.

John 2:9–10 shows that the groom was responsible for the wine at his wedding. Which means it was his shortcoming that let the wedding run out of wine. Verse 9: “When the master of the feast [not the groom but the head waiter] tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom [now you see who is really in charge of the wine] and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.’”

And of course, the point is: No, he didn’t. He let the wine run out. That’s the way it is with grooms on this earth. All husbands fail to be all that we ought to be. But quietly, omnipotently, Jesus plays the role of the perfect, all-providing Bridegroom. Out of water comes wine—better than any husband could provide.

So the third way that Jesus manifested his glory at this wedding was that he showed himself to be the all-providing Bridegroom for his bride, the great assembly of all those who trust in him.

Each of these three manifestations of glory—obedient Son, ultimate Purifier, all-providing Bridegroom—is overflowing with grace. From his fullness, we receive grace upon grace.

As the obedient Son of God, he is not swayed by family ties—not Mary’s and not yours. He is swayed by those who trust his grace.

As the ultimate Purifier, he is not moved by religious ritual. He replaced all Old Testament ritual once for all with his own blood. There is one way to be pure before God—the hardest way for him and the easiest way for you: Wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb. Come to him. Live on him.

And as the all-providing Bridegroom, he never fails to give us what we need. The life-giving wine of his death in our place never runs out. He is the perfect, all-providing husband to his church.

Therefore, as John says in Revelation 19:7, "Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready." Have you made yourself ready? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Heavenly Father,

We love you Lord, and we give you thanks for your love and your grace.

Thank you for revealing yourself to us in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Forgive us for the times when we have doubted,

When our faith has been weakened from the circumstances in our lives.

We pray that you will renew our faith, make it strong,

Fill us with your love, pour out your spirit upon us Lord.

Let your Shalina glory shine through us so that those

We minister to will feel your loving presence with us Jesus,

and believe that you Lord, are God.

Allow them to see the glory of Christ, as you have revealed yourself to us.

Let them receive your grace of believing. Grace upon grace.

May all that we do bring you the praise, all the honor, and all the glory. AMEN.