

January 19, 2025 Sermon

"New Wine - New Way" - John 2: 1-11

There was scattered rain on the radar, but it wasn't supposed to hit until well after the ceremony. Guests gathered, and dark clouds loomed.

As the bride walked down the aisle it started to mist. Then, it drizzled. Then, it absolutely came down in sheets. The wind picked up. Then, the hail started. No one left to find shelter.

There were plenty of people without umbrellas, but they huddled under coats. Their loyalty and love for the couple was compelling. Not to mention, their bridal party stood the entire time (45 minutes!) without umbrellas. Most of the cameras died that day from the moisture. Lesson learned: always bring back up gear and store it in a separate area. Always bring multiple umbrellas and rain gear and maybe, just maybe, bring Jesus to the wedding. He has a knack for taking care of storms, and making sure there is plenty of wine on hand.

Jesus fills the old stone purification jars used for the Jewish rites and turns the water into wine. The old ways are empty, lacking. Jesus does this to show again - new wine - new way! Jesus comes with grace and truth to inaugurate the reign of God - a way of grace and truth for us that overflows - more than enough, brings peace with justice, joy with hope, light over darkness, and more.

How open are we to this new way of Jesus? Jesus comes to bring life and life in abundance - through love and care, outreach and help, kindness and peace.

New wine - intends to point us in new ways - the Jesus way! Something new is about to happen.

The passage starts off with some words that should immediately get our attention but might be missed in a quick reading: "On the third day... a wedding."

"On the third day" should alert Christians to the supreme event of our faith: "on the third day, . . . he arose again from the dead." "On the third day" - Easter! "On the third day" - darkness and death have no more power or victory. God reigns!

According to New Testament scholar, Dale Bruner, the little phrase, "on the third day" throws "a Resurrection aura" over a simple story of a wedding in a nondescript town. There is much more going on here than a wedding, and water to wine. With Jesus on the scene - God is making a major point about who is in charge, what life is about, and God's new way.

No more wine at a wedding is certainly an inconvenience. Wine running out at this wedding is clearly an embarrassment for the hosts, and a concern too to Jesus' mother. No more wine could mean no more party - and that would create great disappointment to the bride and groom and all their guests.

But remember, this is not just about the wedding. The fact that the wine runs out is really a metaphor for so much more.

When Mary, Jesus' mother says, "they have no more wine," it could be a metaphor for anything that is sad or bad that emerges in our lives. The depletion of the wine could be a metaphor of anything in our lives or world where we feel depleted, empty, lost. But not to worry - Jesus is on the scene - to redeem, to bring light and life. Are we going to go with Jesus?

Jesus brings a new way! Most of our difficulties we face today come from a lack of trust in God. Christ came to reveal God. Jesus answered Phillip in John 14:9, "Don't you know me, even after I have been among you for such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Let us take our burdens to the Lord and leave them there. That could be something new for us. Let ourselves go to God. Like the couple and the wedding guests and the bridal party, they persevered and showed us something new about how to respond to the storms in our lives. Jesus comes to bring life and life in abundance.

New wine - intends to point us in new ways - the Jesus way! Can we see Jesus in our midst - and put our trust in him, and become the kind of people he calls us to be? How much does our fractured and divided world need this? We put our trust in him, and we keep striving, with God's help, to be the loving, serving, listening, peaceful people of God! This is our ongoing, living, daily endeavor, like breathing and walking - to become more and more the loving, serving, caring people of God. Amen.