

08/06/23 - WRMA Worship service

Theme - You Better Invite Him!

Scripture - Jn 2:1-11 for 08/06/23

Intro: I grew up in a culture where weddings were communal, just like in Jesus' context. I remember that at every wedding in my community, a special kind of drink made from millet flour was always expected in such events. The groom's or the family hosting the event had to source the services of several well-known specialists in making that fermented special millet porridge. That person had to be known for consistently producing a high-quality drink, which in this case would be kept aside because the in-laws needed to be served with the best before others. If the manager made the mistake of releasing the best drink to the general public before the special party was served enough, the family would feel disappointed and humiliated in case there wasn't enough for the guests. The manager would be at a loss trying to explain why it happened. Maybe there were such failures, but I did not get to know of them. What I know is that my mom was among the best millet drink makers and was always sought after on special occasions. (Kudos, mom).

In today's scripture lesson, we find Jesus at a wedding at **Cana** in Galilee. At that time, a wedding was a weeklong festival where a banquet was prepared for many guests, and the community would spend time celebrating the new life of the newlywed couple. Commentaries note that it was considered an insult to refuse an invitation to a wedding; hence, the whole town often gathered. The Bible says that among the many people invited was Mary, the mother of Jesus, Jesus himself, and his disciples. Interestingly, though the family must have prepared enough to feed all the guests and provide the beverage of choice, something unusual happened: they ran out of wine. As we all would, they started running up and down, trying to figure out what to do. Maybe there was someone in the village with some wine they could use, or probably they could send someone to the store 20 miles or so away to buy. As they were struggling in low tones (*because this was going to shame the family*), Mary, the mother of Jesus, must have overheard them. She is the only person who had the whole divine story about Jesus. She was there when the angel Gabriel came with that she would conceive a son [Lk 1:26-28], she was there when the King wanted to kill the baby Jesus, but God spoke to Joseph in a dream [Matt 2:13], and She also must have observed and listened to him and knew in her heart that he had the power to do something miraculous even though he had not performed anything yet. So, she exits the scene by asking them to do whatever he says. Yes, do whatever he says, including the "**unreasonable**" thing of filling the purification jars with water. We are told that Jesus told the servants to fill six stone water jars with water and then asked them to draw some out and ask the master of the ceremony to taste and confirm. Tasting it, he kind of got furious with the bridegroom for releasing the cheaper wine first only to bring the best of the best when his visitors had been served the cheaper wine. Who does that?!

Friends, what does this mean to us today?

There are many lessons, but let us narrow to these two:

1. **Is Jesus included on the list of the guests?** – You see, the couple in Cana of Galilee thought that they had invited another member of their community when they invited Jesus and his disciples. Maybe they thought it was another Rabi like many others they had. They did not realize that without Jesus's presence, the ceremony would have been ruined by this unforeseen failure.

In other words, in this party called life, we invite many guests, including spouses, property, children, titles, etc. But a smart person does not forget to invite the most important guest, Jesus. I tell you, you will need him at some point. Just like the ceremony at Cana of Galilee, we encounter shortcomings in life. That is why we all need this friend called Jesus. When that happens, and it happens a lot, all we need to do is to let him know.

2. **Listen to what he says and do it** – I thank God for the woman of God, Mary, for being intelligent and spiritually alert. She understood her son and knew what he was capable of doing. But there was a problem, *what if people failed to listen to him? What if they failed to let him take charge?* This brings us to the realization that it is possible to invite Jesus but fail to recognize who he is or to follow his directions. Yes, do what he says! The challenge for us this morning is, after inviting Jesus to the ceremony, next to let him know what is going on and then learn to follow his directions. Just like that family was saved from shame, Jesus came so that we may have abundant life (**Jn 10:10**). As we do life, let us have time for God's word to speak to us. Let us open the ears of our hearts to the guidance and direction of God. Sometimes he will not make sense, just like there was no sense in pouring water into those six stone jars, but that is precisely how the miracle happened.

Brothers and sisters, do we let Jesus know what we are facing, or do we keep talking in low tones and struggling?. Even before the closest friends know, let Jesus know what has run out. Let us learn to tell Jesus our worries and fears.

Then, let us learn to follow his instructions. Yes, like the people of my village invited the best expert in making the special porridge for the wedding, and the couple in John's story did well in Jesus in their ceremony, we can choose to have the best wine now and not later by inviting the miracle worker into our lives. There is still time to invite Jesus into our hearts as Lord and Savior. Indeed, Just like the wine Jesus made was the best, life in him is better than the life we lead on our own.

Jn 1:12 says that all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. So, you better invite him today. When we receive and believe him, we get the right to be the children of God. As such, whatever we may have run out of, he makes new and better [*relationships, careers, communities, churches, etc*]. **Common Church!** Jesus loves us so much that he wants to be in our lives. **Yes, you better invite the Lord to the party! Amen**