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Second Sunday after the Epiphany

St. Paul's (WELS) Moline, IL

3:3

John 2:1-11

### **Put Your Faith in Jesus**

*I. He is good and in control of all things.*

*II. He provides for all your needs.*

When I was growing up my family used to get together quite frequently. I don't just mean my parents and my grandparents but also my aunts and uncles and even my great aunts and uncles. Sometimes it would be quite a large group. What would we do? We would share times and undoubtedly we would hear stories. But it wasn't just any stories. Oftentimes we heard the same stories over and over again, but we didn't mind. As a matter of fact we often would look forward to them. Why?

Those stories told and retold helped us understand our family and who we were. To be sure some of the stories were a bit larger than life but that told us something about our family too.

Today we gather in Epiphany and it is time to hear the stories of our spiritual family. Because they deal with God we can be sure these are no fanciful tales but true realities telling us who Jesus is and what that means for us today.

Today we encounter Jesus' first miracle which occurred at a wedding in Cana. On the one hand this incident and this miracle doesn't stand alone as giving us something important to know about Jesus: in other words Jesus' miracle at Cana is not like Jesus revealing that He came down to earth to die for the sins of mankind; neither is the miracle at Cana something like the Transfiguration whereby some of the disciples (Peter, James and John) saw Jesus in His full glory. On the other hand this miracle tells us everything about Jesus.

This miracle teaches us some important things about Jesus, about God, about His will for us and how He avails Himself for our good. We get a peak into who Jesus is. In fact we get a preview into what Jesus' ministry is going to be like. John tells us that Jesus had disciples at this time and so Jesus had already been baptized; yet when Mary, His mother informs Him that the wine is gone and she is looking for Jesus to do something, He asks her: **"Why do you involve me? My time has not yet come."** (verse 4). What does this tell us about Christ?

First, it tells us that God is open to hearing our requests so that He can respond to our needs. Indeed, time and time again Jesus tells us to ask for whatever we need for in prayer. In the Gospel of Matthew we hear:

**"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"** (Matthew 7:7-11). How open and how bold is this promise?

As people wanted proof and wanted to see God's power Jesus spoke these words and gave them this promise: **"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."** (John 14:10-14). Why does Jesus tell His followers to ask for anything in His name and He will do it? It is a reminder that God is indeed in control of all things.

Jesus' miracle is a reminder of just how powerful God is. Jesus shows that nothing is outside His control. Jesus is able to take water and make it into wine, Jesus is able to be in a boat with His disciples and when a storm rages and the boat seems to be on the brink of capsizing Jesus awakes and is able to calm the storm with the mere power of His command. And yes, Jesus was able to cure the blind, and raise the dead. Jesus is in control of all things even death. This leads us to something else we want to consider about His miracle at Cana.

We know that Jesus turned water into wine. Why did He do this? Jesus did this to make the wedding celebration better. We may pause and ask: Why did Jesus do this and not more? Why didn't Jesus create an entire feast? Why didn't Jesus do an even more powerful miracle? It is because Jesus did enough for what was necessary at that time and place and it had an impact on the disciples and on other who were there. In fact John tells us, **"He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him."** (verse 11).

Jesus did enough to increase the faith of His disciples but He was far from done with them then. Jesus would take them to so many more places and show them so many more miracles--some things they were ready to understand and act on; other things they were not ready for such

as Jesus telling them His mission was to suffer and die for the sins of the whole world. This may even raise a new question: If faith is believing something that you cannot see then how were the disciples putting their faith into Jesus whom they just perform a miracle?

The answer is that the disciples saw Jesus turn water into wine and that indeed strengthen their faith but they were not yet to the point of knowing the extent of Jesus' power and this over time would show as they would become afraid or even ineffective at certain times like when they were not able to perform an exorcism (Matthew 17:14 ff.) or when Jesus asked Peter to step outside of the boat as Jesus was walking on the water which he did until he became afraid and started to drown, or when the disciples were dismayed when Jesus told them to feed thousands of people when they had only seven loaves of bread and a few fish (Matthew 15). Yes, they saw Jesus turn water into wine with their own eyes and they put their faith in Jesus but they had a lot more to learn about Jesus and His mission. They wouldn't fully understand until Jesus died and rose from the grave. Only then was their faith complete.

Today are we any different? Today we know God is good yet we go through periods of struggle and turmoil and we can sometimes wonder why God doesn't do more for us? Do we not see and even receive the miraculous yet we too doubt and act timidly. Today we receive Christ Himself in, with and under the bread and the wine. Jesus is present in the sacrament and when we eat and when we drink our sins are forgiven because that is what Christ has promised. Is this any less a miracle than Jesus turning water into wine? No. But to us too, it may seem too little and too distant. That is why we need to be reminded of who Jesus is and what He is able to do.

Who is this Jesus who is with us today in His promises and in Holy Communion? It is the same Jesus who tells His believers: **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:18-20). It is the same Jesus who Paul wants us to ask ourselves the following question when we doubt or become afraid: **“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”** (Romans 8:31-32). What things will God do? What is Jesus actually capable of? Paul tells us that too: **“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,**

**to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”** (Ephesians 3:20).

The fact is, is that sometimes we do not have simply because we do not take the time to ask Jesus to give us what we need. James--Jesus' brother tells us this, **“You do not have, because you do not ask God.”** (James 4:2). Today we are to learn the lesson that Mary, Jesus' mother teaches us and to simply take our problems to God and to trust and be ready to do whatever God tells us to. When we do that we will always have enough because God is good, He cares for us and He leads us into things that are better than we are capable of asking for ourselves. This is our God and this is why He is great! Amen.