

Sermon January 26, 2025

John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now."

Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Diversity of Gifts

"They have no wine."

Jesus is faced with a dilemma: show what power he has to this wedding party or ignore the pleas of his own mother. Many have described Mary as pushing Jesus into doing something that he wasn't ready to do, but I hear her words today in a different way... more as a question. A question that we all carry deep within ourselves. What if there isn't enough to go around? Do I have enough for myself... for my family? Will I be able to provide for them?

Can I put dinner on the table? Can I pay the bills? Will what I do be good enough?

When Mary turns to Jesus, we hear scarcity in her voice... and Jesus responds with abundance. Once again, there is more than enough to go around.

It's easy to look at the idea of abundance in only economic terms. Having enough money, enough resources. Having enough to provide for yourself and your family. We extend that idea to this place. We look at how many people walk through our doors and how much money is in the offering plate. We worry about budget line items and whether or not we are in the red. These are, of course, important issues, but I believe that God points us to something more.

God's abundance overflows into all parts of our lives and our community. It embraces and includes all members – the weakest and the poorest and the marginalized. God's abundance washes through us and gives us a chance to open our eyes to something new. It is not about what God can do for us... it is not about how much God gives us. It is about what we can do for God. It is about what we do for each other.

God's abundance overflows through us.

God needs all of us for the abundance to continue to flow through our lives and our world. When Paul talks about the diversity of spiritual gifts, Paul is pointing to an important truth: God needs us all.

But it's not always easy. The Corinthian church learned that – it was being torn apart. People were fighting about who was better and who was more blessed. Struggling with who is right and who is wrong. Tensions rose, people left. Others tried to push out those who were different as well. The community was in chaos.

Paul's letter helped to calm the waters. We are so much stronger when we stand together, he said. But that doesn't mean that we all have to be the

same or to see the world in the same way. Our diversity makes us stronger. God has blessed us with so many different ideas and perspectives and gifts. Use them all for the glory of God and watch the abundance flow like wine!

We all bring something special to this community.

Each of us receive these gifts from the Spirit, yet each gift is for the whole body. If a gift cannot be shared, and shared for the good of others, it is not from the Spirit. No gift is better than anyone else's gift because each gift's common purpose is for the good of all. In other words, together we are stronger.

Together, we are the ones who provide in abundance.

A year ago, our church embarked on a new journey. A group of members gathered and began to look at what it would mean to become an opening affirming congregation. As we've opened the process up to the entire congregation, some of you have responded with enthusiastic support and other others with trepidation or concerns. In the coming weeks, there will be opportunities for us to gather both and worship and through Bible study to talk about this issue, as well as addressed peoples questions and concerns.

I believe that this is the time to support our siblings. In the past several days, Executive Orders and proposed bills are designed to take away legal and constitutional rights from those who have little power or societal support.

Queen Esther was a Jewish woman married to the king. Her people were threatened with genocide, and faced a choice: allow her people to be slaughtered and hold on to her own position of power or stand up for justice, no matter her own personal risk. "Perhaps God called you for such a time as this" her uncle told her. She stood up for justice and saved her people. I believe that there is a call on our lives and on our church. Perhaps we were called for such a time as this: to affirm everyone, even those we don't

understand... to lift up the trampled... to offer sanctuary and take care of those who have been wounded by other churches, their families and anyone who rejects instead of loves.

As Paul told us, our diversity makes us stronger.

We need each other. We are stronger together than we ever are alone.

Together... in abundance.

Together, it is amazing what we can happen. It is not what God does for us here, it is what we can do for God, with God, in the name of God. In the words of MLK, we are creating a beloved community. That's God's purpose for us and we are all a part of that process. The beloved community is where we support each other in love and respect. The beloved community is a place where we receive a glimpse of God's presence.

And, in the glow of that sacred presence, we pool our gifts together and witness remarkable things.

We, Trinity Church, are a community, in the tradition of communities that stretch back to the cross. We are a community blessed by God, different than a country club or a rotary club... we have made a sacred commitment to each other when we joined the church. A commitment to love each other, respect each other and try everything we can do keep our relationships strong. A commitment blessed by God for such a time as this

So let us embrace the gifts given and explore what God needs from us next. Let us listen to each other. Let us explore "What is God doing in this place?" What is God doing in our church, in our neighborhood, in the lives of people here and the lives of those beyond our walls? And what does God need us to do as well... together?

We are all members of the beloved community: Many gifts... One bread, one body, one creation. In abundance. Amen