

TEXT: 2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."⁴ "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,⁹ 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 aside¹⁰ 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."¹¹ 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.

Jesus Christ, the God/Man, Reveals His Glory in His Miracles

1. His miracles revealed his glory.
2. His miracles lead us to put our faith in him.

This year (2016) we have a very early date for Easter, March 27th. That means that we have a very short Epiphany season. There are only four Sundays in this year's Epiphany season. During the season of Epiphany we see how Jesus, true man, born of the Virgin Mary, was also revealed to be true God, the Son of God. The Heavenly Father revealed this at Jesus' baptism. We heard the Father's witness last Sunday. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This morning in our lesson we see the witness of his miracles. **Jesus Christ, the God/Man, Reveals His Glory in His Miracles. 1) His miracles reveal His glory as true God. That in turn, 2) leads us to put our faith in him.**

We sometimes describe Jesus' life on earth from his conception through his burial, with the doctrinal term, "State of Humiliation." It is that time Paul describes in Philippians 2 when he says, "**Christ Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.**" "He humbled himself..." That's what we are referring to with the dogmatic term, *State of Humiliation*. A definition given in our catechism for this term, this time of Jesus life, is "*a time when Christ chose not to make full use of his heavenly power and glory so that he might live and die in a lowly way* (LC, question 194). Christ Jesus humbled himself by the lowly manner of his conception, his lowly birth and life, his suffering under Pontius Pilate, his crucifixion, death and burial. Paul said it beautifully. "**You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich**" (2 Corinthians 8:9). "*We usually praise people who start out their lives on the bottom rung of the ladder, so to speak, and then rise to the top by the force of their will, determination and hard work. Jesus, however, began his human existence on the very top. He possessed all of the attributes of God given by the divine nature to the human nature, but he concealed his glory. And then...he worked his way down, so to speak, until 'he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering'* (Isaiah 53:3). *And then to make his humiliation complete, he endured even this, that 'it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer'* (Isaiah 53:10) until in his anguish he cried out, '**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**' (Matthew 27:46) and '**It is finished.**' (John 19:30). *Between the time of his birth and his burial few saw behind the veil of his self-chosen humility. When he went from one place to another, he usually walked. God in the flesh got hungry and tired (Mt. 4:2, Mark 4:38). At the grave of Lazarus, God clothed with a human body and soul wept.(John 11:35)"* (Deutschlander, Grace Abounds, page 303)

"During his state of humiliation, however, Jesus did at times pull back the veil that hid his divine nature and attributes. At times he made a limited use of the divine attributes. He performed numerous miracles, of which our text records the first. With these miracles he demonstrated his almighty power and bore witness to the truth that he Jesus was the true God. These miracles were performed to lead people to or strengthen them in their faith for eternal life. In using his divine attributes Jesus never did anything merely for his own benefit. Always he acted in his miracles for the benefit of those around him, even while proving by the miracles that he was indeed the Son of God. His selflessness, his total devotion to the Father, and his love for us was perfect, even in the miracles. What mere man would ever behave like that, would never use his power for his own benefit but only for the benefit of others? So while pointing to his deity, the miracles at the same time point to his mercy, his grace; for they are done only in service to others, never in service to himself." (Deutschlander)

Our text is an example of all of these truths. After the calling of Jesus' first disciples Jesus went with them to the village of Cana in the region of Galilee. There in this village just north of Nazareth where Jesus grew up a man and a woman were preparing for the most special day of their lives—their wedding day. Previously, they had publicly declared

their faithfulness to one another. Now it was time to celebrate as the groom arrived to take his bride home. They made preparations for this celebration as best they could. They invited friends and relatives to share in their joy. The guest list was impressive—Jesus was there, along with Mary, his mother, and the few disciples he had already gathered around him.

But as the celebration progressed, there was a problem. The servers ran out of wine. This posed a problem because the guests used wine, diluted with water, not simply for toasting the bride and groom but for their normal beverage throughout the normal, customary weeklong celebration. Thankfully Mary came to the bride and groom's rescue—or so it seemed. Knowing that her son was the very Son of God, she approached him and informed him about the lack of wine. But to Mary's surprise—and perhaps to the surprise of the bride and the groom as well—Jesus took no action. In fact, he asked Mary why she was involving him with their problem and informed her that his time had not yet come. Surprised, but not disappointed, Mary spoke to the servants who were responsible for the dinner and instructed them to do whatever Jesus said—whenever that might be.

As the bride and the groom wondered how to salvage their celebration, Jesus stepped into action. His time had come; the time had arrived to perform his first miracle as the God-man. Jesus spoke to the servants who were on duty and directed them to fill six huge jars with water. Each jar held between 20 and 30 gallons of water. The guests had previously used the water in the jars for ceremonial washing upon their arrival at the wedding celebration. After the servants had filled the jars with water, Jesus instructed them to give a sample drink to the person in charge of the banquet. The man knew good wine when he tasted it, and he knew that it was established practice at a wedding celebration like this to serve the best wine first and to serve inferior wine later—after people's senses were dulled and would not notice the difference. But the drink he had just tasted from the water jars was excellent wine—wine that Jesus had just miraculously made from water. It was the kind of wine that people normally brought out at the beginning of the banquet, not at the end.

The bride and the groom happily saw a solution to their problem, and Jesus' followers saw Jesus more and more as the person he claimed to be: the Son of God, their Savior, the promised Messiah. John writes, "**He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.**"

Jesus revealed his glory, the glory that was most of the time hidden from public view by his human flesh during his State of Humiliation, in order to strengthen the faith of his disciples. Eventually Peter speaking for all of them would confess, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.**" At this point they were perhaps still asking, "Who is this man? John the Baptist had already told them that Jesus was the "Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus is true God—"the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father?" (Nicene Creed) Do you believe that "through him all things were made?" Do you believe as you confess in the Nicene Creed that "For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human? If you find that difficult to swallow then look at the miracles. They reveal his glory as true God by showing us his almighty power. Here Jesus displays power over nature itself by converting water into wine. No one but God could do that. And there's more! Jesus showed power over demons and death. He controlled the weather and things that we today call acts of God, storms on the sea of Galilee. He healed diseases like leprosy. He healed those who were blind and paralysed. He gave the ability to speak to the mute. He healed the injured. He was able to feed thousands with just a little bit of food and then what was gathered at the end was more than he started out with. He helped fishermen make great catches of fish. His miracles reveal his glory as the true God—that he is "**the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word,**" as the writer to the Hebrews says (1:3).

Jesus had to be God to accomplish our salvation. Only as true God could he keep the Law perfectly. (Active Obedience) (Romans 5:19) Only as true God could his holy, precious blood be a ransom for the sins of the whole world! (Passive Obedience) (Mark 10:45)

But Jesus let us have a peek of his glory for another reason—to lead us to put our faith in him. Jesus wants us to trust in him for salvation, yes, but also for help in the day of trouble this side of heaven. When we injure ourselves with a fall, when we need surgery to replace a knee or remove a kidney stone, when our body is ravaged and endangered by infection, Jesus wants us to trust in him for help. He wants us to know that he is the almighty God who is able and willing to help us. His miracles demonstrated that for sure. In his grace, mercy and wisdom he always does what is best for us. We know that when the time is right he will help us. He has a gracious plan for our lives. He responds to our needs in a way that is best for our faith and the spiritual needs of others around us. Above all, he invites us, "Come to me all you who are wearied and burdened, and I will give you rest." We can be assured that when we come to Jesus for help and put our burdens into his hands, we will have nothing to worry about. Jesus is almighty and he is gentle and loving. He is not just concerned about my present needs, but that my eternal needs are met. For that reason he died for me and sent the Holy Spirit to give me faith in him so that I would live eternally. May Jesus revealed glory lead each of us to faith in Him that we ourselves will someday share in his glory in heaven. Amen!