Jan. 14, 2018 Wedding at Cana John 2:1-11 (Psalm 104:14- 16) Liturgical color: Green

PRAYER OF THE DAY God of revelation, You made your son known at a wedding, a public celebration of love. Celebrate love with us by revealing Jesus in our midst. Amen.

Psalm 104:14 You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, 15 and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart. 16 The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

HYMNS Oh, worship the king ELW 842 Jesus shall reign ELW 434, H82 544, UMH 157, NCH 300 Earth and all stars ELW 731 CHORAL O God, beyond all praising, Gustav Holst

**Announcements Prayers**

Annual reports today Kathy & Dave Pachuilo (grief)

Offering boxes ready today Dave Jacobs (hospital)

Sign-up to read on January 28th Tom Ravert hip healing?, Barry Wurst knee this coming week

I love you feast – food sign-up (Feb 11) Ben Kline /family Promotion in Texas

PEP feast, Amish wedding dinner Saturday

Meetings this week: Council

Coming Cong mtg 2/4… Souper Bowl

In this season of Epiphany which means, to recognize or reveal…

I need to reveal a little something from last week. {I think it was Suzy, or Kay?? Who asked a helpful question… what is that little box on the altar? It was not part of the hidden hot chocolate of the children’s message… } it was part of the confirmation class’s Epiphany treasure Hunt. The box is the manger from the nativity set on my desk. The students found treats that were revealed by lights and tables… as Jesus was revealed to be the Light of the world, most notably as the lamb of God, sacrificed to make full amends for our sins… and we remember this when we come to the communion feast at the table.

In today’s gospel reading, again we are shown Christ in the midst of the people, but he is not yet fully known. The impact of the full identity of Jesus is revealed to a few at a feast, a wedding feast & celebration. And again there is a hint at the cost for his identity as The Lamb of God who takes away the SIN of the world. {singular, because in John’s gospel the sin of the world is being alienated from God, rather than a laundry list of things done & left undone.}

The hint is “on the third day”… you know… what happens on third days in the Bible? { about 50 OT/NT}:

* Gen 22:1-4 When Abraham arrived at his destination to sacrifice his son Isaac… it was on the 3rd day of travel. {willing to obey and give his only son born to Sarah, Ishmael is gone already 21:8}
* Gen 40:17 Joseph’s interpreted dreams come true with life (cup-bearer) and death (baker) consequences at Pharaoh’s birthday party… {bread and wine}
* Gen 42:16-20 Joseph’s brothers are thrown in prison for three days, then released to carry-on messages and food and heart-ache
* Ex 19:1 on the third day after the exodus from Egypt the Israelites reached the Sinai wilderness; and then on another 3rd day, the LORD came down to Mt. Sinai in the sight of the people as the 10 commandments were first given… the people were given 3 days for purification to prepare
* Mt 16; Lk 9 Jesus will be killed and on the third day raised from the dead

Here, in this gospel, we might ask 3rd day since what? Well, since the Pharisees sent messengers to John the Baptist (1:24) asking who are you and why are you baptizing?

* 1:29 the next day John the Baptist declares Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (as Jesus walked toward them)
* 1:35 the next day John was with 2 of his disciples… here is the lamb of God (as Jesus walked by)
* 1:43 the next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee, found Phillip and said follow me & Nathaniel exchange

On the third day! … would this be ‘the same day’?... or 3 days later?

Or is John making a powerful connection point? {He does this frequently in this gospel};

* the 3rd day is a day when sacrifice is revealed
* the 3rd day is a judgement day where dreams are revealed relating to bread and wine
* the 3rd day is a release from prison, a release of what this bread of life will cost in human terms
* the 3rd day is a day when imperfect people are made holy, given rules for life and a covenant by God
* the 3rd day will eventually lead to a resurrection day, a day of new life, new creation, for now it is an epiphany day

Jesus and his disciples (Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathaniel) were invited to the wedding… so was the mother of Jesus {although in this gospel she is never called by her name, Mary}

This is an ordinary human celebration that would have lasted days

Jesus may have had an ordinary parent-child reaction ‘Jesus there’s a problem.’ ‘so?!’ ‘Just do it’

Then we go way beyond ordinary and human… 6 x 20-30 gallon jars… 120-180 gallons of wine! Filled to the brim, that how God’s abundance works… 100%! Maybe communion should have a larger flagon? ☺ This is not a ‘miracle’ it is a ‘sign’… and only the first of his signs (2:11), the best is yet to come. I love to tell the story of Jesus and his glory… which is first revealed here: Glory was revealed (epiphany!) but in a limited way to the servants… and maybe to the disciples of Jesus, who now believed in him… the best is yet to come.

The servants know the remarkable truth… the water was turned to wine. Again here in the beginning of the gospel of John, the leaders do not understand the whole truth. And maybe they never will understand that in divine hosting the best is saved for last, even though this is the opposite of the normal practice; with God, the best is yet to come…

What does this mean for us today? Well… a story attributed to Rodger William Thomas illustrates the ultimate meaning of Jesus as the Messiah and Lamb of God whom we follow through life and through the gate of death:

“A woman was diagnosed with a terminal illness and given three months to live. She asked her pastor to come to her home to discuss her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at her funeral, and what scriptures to read, and which outfit she wanted to be buried in.

Then she said, "One more thing. I want to be buried with a fork in my hand."

The pastor was surprised. The woman explained, "In all my years of attending church socials and potluck dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, `Keep your fork.' It was my favorite time, because I knew something better was coming, like velvety chocolate cake or ..{wet-bottom shoe-fly} pie -- something wonderful. So, I want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and wonder, 'What's with the fork?' Then, I want you to tell them, `Keep your fork, because the best is yet to come."'

The pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he bid the woman goodbye. He realized that she had a better grasp of heaven than he did, and knew something better was coming.

At the funeral, when people asked him why she was holding a fork, the pastor told them of the conversation he'd had with the woman before she died. He said he could not stop thinking about the fork, and knew they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it, either. He was right. {With Jesus, The Lamb of God at work in the world- RWK} Keep your fork. The best is yet to come.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Chicago Tribune Aug 12, 2000 http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2000-08-12/news/0008120241\_1\_dear-ann-landers-wedding-ring-fork [↑](#footnote-ref-1)