

John 2:1-11  
January 20, 2019 – 2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

## Jesus Shines As God

✧ in our need (vv.1-5)  
✧ for our worship (vv.6-11)

Dear bride of Christ our heavenly Bridegroom:

Do you know anyone who sells God short, just can't seem to recognize that God even exists, much less say anything good about Him – or whatever they want to call their deity? Across the centuries God put this in writing so that we would know who the true God is and know Him as our Savior from sin, from death and hell: ***“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols....Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.”*** (Isaiah 42:8; 45:22 NIV84) Sadly, we Christians still sell God short, failing to praise Him as we ought.

If you listened closely to our First Reading (Isaiah 62:1-5), God is pouring out his heart like the Lover that He is for His bride, the Church of all believers of all time. Desperate times lay ahead when they'd be called, ***“Abandoned”*** and ***“Desolation.”*** But, ***“No more!”*** God says as He expresses His marriage delight and joy over you who trust His grace. How could we ever know how good God is if He did not allow difficulties, then bring deliverance from hard times? Epiphany is all about how God's own Son Jesus Christ reveals His true identity as the LORD. **Jesus Shines As God...**

✧ in our need (vv.1-5)

Writing sermons like this is such a privilege. We're taught to go back and read previous chapters to see God's Word in context. We're also trained to share our lives with God's people so this message of new life can ring true and bless us where we are at all ages, young or old, everyone in between. In John 1, we see the Word of God ***in the beginning*** creating as God, taking on human flesh to dwell among us ***“full of grace and truth.”*** We hear John the Baptist cry out: ***“Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”*** If you're not sure what that means for you, go ahead and pinch yourself. Feel that flesh? Jesus wants to feel everything with you in joy and in pain. Look around you. See what a sorry state this world is in? It was no better in Jesus' day. And if you look around and see you're still ***in the world***, then know that Jesus came to take away your guilt too. Dreadful **need** – awesome Savior!

Now imagine you're getting married. Several couples here don't have to imagine. They're making wedding plans as they study God's Word together. We remember how God said of Adam, ***“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”*** (Genesis 2:18) God makes you feel your **need** in order that you can rejoice when he fills your **need**. Feel it; He fills it...you praise Him!

This couple at Cana in Galilee must have had some serious **need**. Jewish weddings lasted a full week or more with wine as a staple. Did they run out early because this couple was so poor? Were Jesus and His disciples unexpected guests that used up supplies faster than planned? We don't know, but this was a major embarrassment for the couple and maybe a real hardship for their newlywed finances. Mary and Jesus must have been close enough to the couple for her to come to her Son and lay the **need** before Jesus: ***“They have no wine.”*** (EHV<sup>1</sup>) Faithful Mary knew where to go for help.

Does it sound a little harsh when Jesus answers? ***“Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet.”*** His childhood relationship as the boy who eagerly did her bidding is past. Jesus' ministry has begun. He's serving as Savior under God the Father. Timing is everything.

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless stated otherwise, Evangelical Heritage Version. (NPH 1-800-662-6022) More info. <http://wartburgproject.org>.

Can we recognize God's timing in every personal and congregational **need**? This is one great insight for not selling God short of the glory He deserves as good and merciful. It helps us in the midst of any **need** still to pray: *"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever."* (Psalm 118:1) Trusting God's *mercy*, you can praise Him as *good* before your circumstances ever change. In the midst of every **need** we learn to say, *"Give thanks to the LORD."* He turns troubles into blessings.

Is there a long felt grief, some heartache or pain that no one else knows? Be sure of this, God knows and God cares. He is not finished with you yet – helping, guiding, blessing. You don't see it yet because His *"time has not come yet."* Remember Joseph a prisoner in Egypt for nearly twenty years? His own brothers sold him into slavery! When God's time finally came, Joseph became prime minister of Egypt and saved the people of the promise so our Savior could come from Israel. *Be patient and await His leisure....Perform your duties faithfully. And trust his Word; though undeserving, You'll find his promise true to be. God never yet forsook in need The soul that trusted him indeed.* (CW 444:1, 4 combined)

Surely our Lord **Jesus Shines As God in our need** for our congregation too. **Jesus Shines...**

### ✧ for our worship (vv.6-11)

How can we respond more beautifully than Jesus' mother Mary? She does not argue. She does not scold her Son, her Savior. She turns to the servants and gives such simple, profound advice: *"Do whatever he tells you."* Then she walks away, fully confident Jesus will help in His own time and way.

Our congregation president spent many hours in past weeks asking brothers to stand for elections today. Only one outside of those already serving was willing and / or able to say, "Yes." Brothers and sisters, let's trust in God to guide us here too, even while we pray more fervently for workers in Christ's harvest field. **Worship** God with thanks for all the men and women He has touched with grace to serve so faithfully, many years and countless hours. We pray for God to empower His people to respond in heartfelt **worship** as God's promises in Christ are always, *"Yes!"* (2 Corinthians 1:19f)

See how Jesus enriched the **worship** of this poor couple at Cana? Archaeology suggests a volume larger than previously thought. Jesus created 120 – 180 gallons of fine wine, priced conservatively @ \$50 – \$100 / 750 ml bottle. Yet, some would scoff at this, like the owner of a kiosk at Masada (2014) selling wine from his vineyard near Gilgal for \$350 / bottle. When I said to the young woman pouring samples, "That's a bit high for my budget," she replied very seriously, "He knows what he has." I wasn't trying to negotiate. No matter how you figure volume and cost, what a wonderful wedding gift our gracious Lord Jesus gave this couple. They could not afford wine before, but now they have plenty to enjoy or sell as needed. Six jars (150 gallons, 568 liters ~ 757 750 ml bottles) @ \$50, \$100, \$350: \$30,000 – \$300,000. Wow!

Wish God would do that for you? He already has and vastly more. You and I get to see how **Jesus Shines** in His glory **As God** all the way to the cross and through the empty tomb. We are rich beyond imagination to be able to enjoy God's blessings. That what God calls *life – the enjoyment of God's blessings*. And we've only just begun to live. New life in Christ extends beyond time into eternity.

We've been celebrating this sacred trust for over thirty years (1989-2019). God has preserved among us His greatest gifts that no amount of money could buy. This cost the blood of God's own Son which Jesus willingly shed for you, for me, for all. Pure grace has been given to us in Christ. His pure grace drives us in offerings like those received in December. In answer to our prayers, God helped us finish 2018 strong. Now we can press forward in 2019, giving thanks with our offerings in **worship** because we want others to know this peace which surpasses all understanding, which guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. He **Shines** as the Creator who could take H<sub>2</sub>O and create C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>6</sub> + the time it takes to ferment + other elements to make fine wine. *"I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5) But *"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13) God grant His finest wine from New Life! Amen.

For *The Preacher's Apprentice (TPA)* sermon study or copies: m.cordes@comast.net . New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church  
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at [www.wels.us/newlife](http://www.wels.us/newlife) . 180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126