

“Lord God, you have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument – but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

### John 2:1-11 (EHV)

<sup>1</sup>Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.

<sup>3</sup>When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no wine.”

<sup>4</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not come yet.”

<sup>5</sup>His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

<sup>6</sup>Six stone water jars, which the Jews used for ceremonial cleansing, were standing there, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup>Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” And they did.

<sup>9</sup>When the master of the banquet tasted the water that had now become wine, he did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew). The master of the banquet called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had plenty to drink, then the cheaper wine. You saved the good wine until now!”

<sup>11</sup>This, the beginning of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.



I can remember **when a good time seemed empty**. It was Christmas and I was going home to see family. The plan was to depart John Wayne airport in Orange County and arrive home by the end of the day. But the flights were canceled due to weather in Colorado and the Midwest. It was supposed to be a good time, but it was empty – emptied by the fact that I could not be with those I loved.

I can remember another time when a good time seemed empty. I had the privilege in 2011 to visit Israel and walked where Jesus walked. But besides for a good roommate, I had no close friends and no family to share it with.

Sometimes even in Israel, walking where Jesus walked, I forgot to step back and remember I was not alone. The good times were magnified in the fact that Jesus still walked alongside me, just as He has promised, “Surely I am with you always to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Isn’t it easy to forget ...

## God In The Good Times

### 1. An invitation for Jesus

Today **St. John writes that a certain family in Cana**, not 10 miles from Nazareth, **was celebrating a wedding**. Just imagine: Many hours of thoughtful preparation went into planning that wedding day. They selected the people for a wedding party. They sent invitations to the list of guests. They consulted on colors, materials, and patterns. They met with the florist to arrange the synagogue. They discussed the right music to beautify the service. They met with the local rabbi to discuss the meaning of marriage.

They rehearsed the night before. (Maybe they didn't do all these things as we do today, but there were big plans, usually in those days including week-long festivities.)

All those plans were important to the happy couple and to the wedding guests. Together they had a day of beauty to grace their memories as they celebrated each consecutive wedding anniversary. All plans were complete. Food and drink for the reception were ready. There was ample space for the guests. The host could think of no further need.

**But in their plans they also invited the wedding Guest**, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. They had invited Jesus and His disciples to the marriage. Jesus was a special Guest. He had not been invited to serve or entertain. They were simply happy to have Jesus as a part of their ceremony and celebration.

**This serves as a great example for us.** We often think to invite God into our bad times; how about the good times? How about the important days in our lives? How about not just the problems but the successes? You will want to invite Him as your permanent Guest also because He gives meaning to the other things you take into life.

**During the wedding festivities the host discovered a lack of wine.** Perhaps there had been a mistake in the order. The host may not have counted the number of guests. The lack of wine would be embarrassing for the bridal pair. Here was a problem pressing for a solution. The mother of Jesus informed Him of the need. "They have no wine," she said.

So again Jesus was invited to the good times. No one was sick or dying. No one was in deep trouble or risking their neck. At worst was someone's reputation, and the mother of Jesus has the sense to present the issue to Him.

You'll also notice that Mary, Jesus' mother, doesn't command Him to help. She doesn't tell Jesus what to do. She probably oversteps her changing role as His mother, since Jesus has now started His public ministry and it's outside of her responsibility to give Him instructions. Meanwhile there is wisdom in simply presenting the issue, as she did to the Son of God, without telling Him what to do.

**Even in the good times, there is a need for Jesus.** Sin in your hearts is the cause of your greatest need, and sin leaves no good time on earth untouched. The Bible tells us that we have evil natures. The selfish heart rises in protest against the demands of God. The human heart makes demands at the expense of other people. Offenses and conflicts arise. Married couples don't live yet in paradise. He doesn't help out. She resents without communicating. Turns out Mr. Right is only Mr. Pretty-good, and Miss Perfect is actually only semi-perfect. Both in the marriage are sinners, and sins need forgiveness. Only the help of Jesus can take away your wrongful deeds. In His death on the cross He has suffered the punishment for your sins. His blood cleanses us from all sins. He has positioned us to face trials in our marriage and to remember how good we have it. You will need this forgiving love of Jesus in your marriage and in every relationship.

Meanwhile we may be in the bad habit of forgetting how Jesus helps even in good times, that ***Jesus makes good times better.***

## **2. An epiphany for everyone else**

**In His own time our Lord provided.** I repeat: Jesus gives it *time*.

He asked the servants to fill the earthen vessels with water. This water he commanded them to bring to the master of ceremonies, who called it "good wine." **The festivities continued.** Jesus, the Son of God, provided wine by performing a miracle.

**The Lord Jesus provides for your material needs.** No person or pair can be wholly self-reliant. Determination and devotion to duty have their limits. Families may develop a systematic plan of saving, budgeting and health protection. But these will not be enough to meet the necessities of life.

***You will need the same power which turned water into wine.***

For days of defeat, for nights of distress, for weeks of troubling illness, for months of tribulation, you will need the providing power of the Savior Jesus. For these needs take Him by faith into your marriage.

**This was a copiously joyful miracle.** It was in fact the first miracle of Jesus' ministry. Jesus could have chosen a time of evil or catastrophe, a time of tragedy or distress, to manifest Himself. Instead, the epiphany, or 'manifest appearance,' of Jesus was on a good day, for a good time.

Christ shows us in actuality what is the universal hour for help from God: When human reason no longer knows how to come up with answers.

**Jesus gives meaning to the good times. He makes good times better.** For one thing, He makes it less about us. Sin always does this; it makes it about us. We can be puffed up with pride because our sin is about us; or we can be a real downer because again we are thinking about us. Jesus makes it about something bigger.

For another thing, **Jesus makes good times better ... because He makes life eternal.** He paid for our eternally condemning sins by dying our death. In so doing, He caused God to justify the sinner and extend His eternal kingdom to you and me. By faith He makes our lives last, so that our good times are just a hint of what is coming.

- Our forgiven sins are just a beginning that won't be swallowed up in the sands of time.
- Our sacrament of Holy Communion is just a foretaste of heaven to come.
- Our salvation cannot be separated us, for nothing can separate us from our God.

Our good times last because His promise is sure.

Most guests returned home after that special day. Our earthly guests may depart from our good times. One Guest will remain as a permanent resident of our homes, our marriages, our single believers, and the rest of our lives.

**CONCLUSION:** So Jesus has given meaning to our special word, "Epiphany." It means Jesus is manifest; He has truly appeared in the flesh. The wise men knew Him in His epiphany, and John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the epiphany of His ministry. Today Jesus' miracles prove Him to be manifestly apparent, for the water-into-wine was only the start of many miracles. This is the first sign that showed Him to be God-made-man.

And it was this way for everyone at that wedding to see and believe in His name.

Amen.