

January 20, 2019 Sermon “Water to Wine”
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Jesus, God incarnate, attended a party and much to the potential embarrassment of the host and caterer of that party - they ran out of wine. There seemed to be plenty of water, so Jesus turned some of that water into wine. Later on, John quotes Jesus as saying, “Very truly, I tell you, the son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the son does likewise”.
God the creator was - and still is in the business of turning water into wine. He is still in the business of miracles.

The two years immediately following my retirement, were spent in the Yakima Valley in Washington. Judy and I watched this same miracle happen each of those years. This very year - God is going to turn water into wine in Washington the Greater.
This morning the snow lies heavy upon the high peaks of the Cascade Mountains. In just a few weeks it will start to melt and flow down the mountain sides, across the foothills and into that Valley. There it will collect in reservoirs and be routed to the Yakima River. From there it will flow through irrigation canals out into the vineyards.

Once in the vineyards, it will seep through fertile soil into the roots and travel up through the vines into the fruit. Late Summer / early fall, the grapes will be cut, processed and eventually bottled. Also, much of the Washington grape harvest will, in bulk, be railroaded south to California Wine Country where the Vineyard keepers no longer have sufficient water.

You know - In a couple of years you may come to church and during Eucharist take a sip of wine, and in so doing, you may drink into your bodies a bit of that same snow that this morning lies somewhere near the top of Mt. Rainier.

We are surrounded by God’s miracles and seldom marvel at the glory of the miracle worker.

I know, --- Jesus did in a few minutes what normally takes a couple of years, but remember my sermon about God being bigger than time. God created, and controls and uses time.

I think we can catch just a glimpse of Jesus the Miracle Worker through the imagery of timed photography. We can photograph a flower blossoming over a period of several days, edit the film and watch the glory and splendor of life bursting into radiant beauty in a matter of seconds. It’s real – the action is there, caught on film – it’s not magic --- we often just don’t perceive the drama and the beauty – and yes the miracle of that blossom - - because of our limited view of time.

Timed photography. With the miracles of Christ - our film editor is the Holy Comforter and we peer through a spiritual lens rather than the glass lens of a camera. The action is real.

The Son does only what he sees the Father doing. He feeds a multitude with two small fish and five loaves of bread. If we took that grain and put it into the ground rather than using it to bake those five loaves, over time we would have enough bread to feed the multitude. If we took just two small fish, assuming one was a girl fish and the other a boy fish, and put them in a large pond, we would soon have enough fish to feed a multitude.

Someone may remind me, “you’re talking about natural process here – not super-natural miracles.” My answer would simply be, “With God, I have a problem separating nature from miracle.” Our bodies, our life and our precious natural environment, all seem so miraculous. I think this kind of thinking serves to enhance the concept of miracles, rather than demean the natural.

There is an illustration – a little story that helps express my thinking here. ‘Once upon a time, the brightest scientists from around the world – got together and paid God a personal visit. Those scientists told God they had arrived – that is they were now prepared to do what he did. They had mastered all the knowledge about genes and chromosomes, chemistry, biology and anatomy and they were now ready to create a human being on their own.

God inquired as to how they proposed to start their process, and they answered, “We’re going to start the same way you did – with just a small hand full of dirt. // God responded, “OH – where you getting your dirt?”

I suspect Christ looked at all those jugs of water, and thought to himself – you know, my heavenly parent has already done the difficult part here. He created the water.

But it is not insignificant that Christ, (with a little help from his Mom), started his miraculous ministry by turning water into wine. Where there is water there is life! At a wedding party, He who was both truly human and truly God; wed the natural with the supernatural – the environmental with the spiritual.

All of Christ’s miracles are about life. The Son knows the parent is in the business of giving life and the Son must be about the Father’s business.