

Sermon Notes – January 19, 2025
The Holy Gospel of St. John 2: 1-11
Peace Lutheran Church
“Bearing God's Gifts of Creative Power”

Normally, good wine results when given careful attention. The grapes ripen, are harvested, and are pressed, and then the juice is given months (or years) to gain the flavors that will commend the resulting wine to the vineyard owner. What, then, does it signify that Jesus turns water into wine in an instant? He commands the growing, pressing, and aging all at once. It is a surprise to the witnesses, both the stewards and the guests. And Jesus does not take credit to Himself. He stays in the background while the wedding celebrants marvel. This is the way of life in Christ. It does not call attention to itself, but offers essential gifts that yield gratitude.

Despite this occasion being their “big time,” the bridal couple never appears, although the steward speaks to the bridegroom (v. 10). Jesus says His own “big time” has not yet come, and yet He quietly performs a miracle that allows the wedding feast to continue. Without the love of God in Christ Jesus, the celebration on this day would have ended.

In this story, as with so much of what the gospels tell us, expectations are reversed. It seems that the host has served the good wine last - another reversal from the expected norm. The one in the background who caused the good wine to be available becomes the dominant character by doing something invisible - and yet vital and tangible. This is how the Holy Spirit works in our midst. It is in keeping with the power of servanthood. Only the servants know where the wine came from. This is yet another image that tells us something essential about faith. The ones who are not in charge, who do not own the great stone jars or the house where the party is held, know more than the elite.

Just as Jesus changed the water into wine, so He changes our self-willed, ordinary tastelessness for something richer, finer, and full of color and life. Made in God's image, baptized into the body of

Christ, we are, as Isaiah says, "...a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord," and "...as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall Your God rejoice over you" (62: 3, 5). The marriage imagery commends me to use language that speaks to the unity of Christ with the church. What is common is transformed into something choice and special beyond any silver or gold. All are meant to be in service for the common good.