

Traditional Home service

Sunday 16th Jan

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by
the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us admit to God the sin which always
confronts us.

Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your
love. Wash away our wrongdoing and
cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your
salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to
God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms,
hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Jesus, joy of our desiring*)

READINGS - John 2 v 1-11
 Isaiah 62 v 1-5
 Revelation 19 v 6-9

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth. I believe in
Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who
was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of
the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead. On
the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven, he is seated at the right
hand of the Father, and he will come to
judge the living and the dead. I believe in
the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness
of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation,
our community and our families.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your
name, your kingdom come, your will be
done, on earth as in heaven. Give us
today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver
us from evil. For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours, now and for
ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*Great is Thy faithfulness*)

CONCLUSION

May God give to you and to all those you
love his comfort and his peace,
his light and his joy, in this world and the
next; and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you
always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Jesus, joy of our desiring,
holy wisdom, love most bright;
drawn by thee, our souls aspiring
soar to uncreated light.
Word of God, our flesh that fashioned,
with the fire of life impassioned,
striving still to truth unknown,
soaring, dying round thy throne.

2 Through the way where hope is
guiding,
hark, what peaceful music rings;
where the flock, in thee confiding,
drink of joy from deathless springs.
Theirs is beauty's fairest pleasure;
theirs is wisdom's holiest treasure.
Thou dost ever lead thine own
in the love of joys unknown.

1. Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my
Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions,
they fail not
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath
provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

2. Summer and winter and springtime
and harvest
Sun, moon and stars in their courses
above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love

3. Pardon for sin and a peace that
endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to
guide
Strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow
Blessings all mine with 10, 000 beside

Sermon - Louise Morton Jesus, the perfect bridegroom

Intro - In the gospels obviously everything thing counts, all the authors you imagine had to choose what they put in, what was left out...

John in the crafting of his gospel though seems to have been particularly careful, he took a less is more approach in what he recorded, his stories are fewer, last longer, he has chosen carefully, in his words: these things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in his name, he ends his gospel, there are also many other things Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

So let's approach this story of the wedding feast at Cana particularly for how it shows us who Jesus is, and how he gives us life in his name!

A bit of Context... A Middle Eastern wedding was a big event, lasted a week!

Lives were consumed by hard work, poverty, a wedding would be such a wonderful treat! And extraordinarily expensive for the hosts you would presume?

Cana was very near Nazareth, early writings suggest the grooms mother could of been Mary's sister? We don't know, but Mary, Jesus, presumably his brothers and sisters, and a few disciples were certainly guests! And Mary must of had inside knowledge of what was going on!

Couple of things I want to note!
Jesus is now 30, 18 years of obscurity have passed in Nazareth, maybe after Joseph died Jesus kept the family business going until his brothers could take over?
At 12 in the temple Jesus tells his mother he must be about his Fathers business, in these years of obscurity the everyday done well, would of been the Fathers business, the family looked after, the chair made....

The seemingly everyday things of life are important to God, if we home make and cook, offer hospitality, parent, work the land, nurse, drive a taxi.....what ever we do..... all can be done for His kingdom, everything counts!

Secondly Jesus liked to party!
He gained a reputation as a glutton and a drunkard, I'm sure he was neither!
But words of William Barclay! : Jesus was no severe austere kill joy. He loved to share in the happy rejoicing of a wedding feast.
There are certain religious people who shed a gloom wherever they go, suspicious of all joy and happiness.

Jesus never counted it a crime to be happy. Why should his followers do so?

No wine, and it's solution!

In the east hospitality was a sacred duty, and even more so at a wedding, to run out of wine would bring shame and disgrace, even law suits!

So interesting the exchange between Mary and Jesus, on one level! Could think it's very typically a female and male approach to a social dilemma!

Gross generalisation maybe ! Woman sees there's a need wants to help sort it!
Man sees there's a need, and thinks doesn't need to be our call!
Or maybe its more to do with character types!

Any ways, Mary says there's no wine.
Jesus answer: woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come.

May sound abrupt, but term woman, is translated from a word often meant with tenderness, also used by Jesus on the cross when he passes his mother's care to John, could be a bit more like woman dear.....
It could seem as if Jesus will do nothing, but his mother must of seen it differently! She says no more, leaves it to her son, and instructs the servants, great phrase!

Do whatever he tells you!

She trusts the situation to Jesus and leaves it to him.

A commentator wrote this, Jesus with his 'courteous rebuke,' declares at the beginning of his ministry, his utter freedom from any kind of human advice, agenda or manipulation. This uniquely hard for the mother who bore Him! But

.....
I think it's so good to be clear : He is not a genie!
Or a tame magician, He is the Son of God, he would do, and will do, whatever he had decided to do, and whatever that was, or is, will be good right and acceptable.

We've just heard what happens next, the servants asked by Jesus, fill the water pots to the brim!
Then some water is poured into a jug, taken to the chief steward and declared delicious! The best wine....

Maybe part of why he says: his hour hasn't yet come, is that this intervention by Jesus has removed the likelihood of shame and disgrace for the newly weds.
A picture of what's coming in the cross....the supreme action of disgrace removal!

This giving of wine poured out and shared, a foretaste of the shedding of his blood that covers us all with his grace ?

You could also wonder about the water pots! these were used as John notes to fulfil the law, in using water from them to make wine, is there this demonstration of the old and the new ? Water for cleansing, becoming through Jesus, wine for drinking, for enjoying and removing disgrace.

A way for us to see him as Messiah, Son of God, and by believing having life in his name?

Jesus the perfect bridegroom

By providing the wine Jesus is taking on the role of bridegroom, maybe that's another part of what he means when he says my time has not yet come!? His time to be the bridegroom is still a head of him, so this miracle of best wine for a wedding would be a fore taste, literally! Of what's coming...

John recognised what he'd seen, he noted its weighty ness : Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in Him.

John was hooked!

Wedding theme recurring in scripture.

Pick out bits from readings:

Isaiah: And as a bridegroom is happy in his bride, so your God is happy with you.

Revelation, beautifully, also written by John who had sat and presumably drunk wine at the wedding in Cana!

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

Jesus the bridegroom and the bride is the church, his followers, those who have embraced his Grace, those who have surrendered to him, corporately the bride together, pouring down the aisle toward Him!

Scripture uses human relationships to help us understand who God is, Jesus asks us to pray: Our Father.... And growing in our understanding of who Father God is, what he is like, is key for us, all of our earthly fathering will have been imperfect! And for some it will of been abusive....

But we still need to learn to trust our Heavenly Father, understand how he sees us.....

Similarly with this picture of bride and bridegroom, some of us can capture the beauty

of it through our earthly experience of marriage, for others it will be harder, for some maybe really painful, but as with growing in our understanding of Father God, expanding our thinking about being part of the glorious bride, embraced by Jesus our royal groom, can be faith growing.

I have the extraordinary blessing of being part of a great marriage, 35 years old this year, see if I can try examples in the natural to expand our thinking in the spiritual!

A bridegroom happy in his bride, from Isaiah, back in 1987 as I came down the aisle I saw! My husband to be happy to see me! A look of love... Ten years later when he brought home a puppy, George our first dog, I saw the same look of love, as he got him out of the car, I had wanted a dog for years, Adrian would happily live dog free..

A real key I think to good marriages is that preferring the other, of bending ourselves in the direction of our partner, we've learned something of it over the years.....

Your God is happy with you, what bothers you bothers Him, this is not manipulative, not the tame magician! But genuinely caring, He is looking at us with love, individually and corporately.

As John writes, the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. His supreme act of preferring going to the cross for us...

Marriage is two way! This preferring of Him needs developing in us.

The bride has made herself ready (revelation), what is being ready?

It is being clothed in the righteous deeds of the saints, the church is dressed, made ready, by our choices in life, choosing to do right, choosing to prefer his way over our way...loving the bridegroom, these are the linen garments pure and white, I was considering this walking the dog in the frost Friday morning, looking at all the white twigs, how the frost covers them. For us in his preferring of us he has taken the ugliness, the mistakes... so we his bride are able to dress in the good stuff! That's all he sees as we come before him

Psalm reading for today from the message.

God's love is meteoric,
His loyalty astronomic,
His purpose titanic,
His verdicts oceanic.

Yet in his largeness nothing gets lost,
Not a man, not a mouse, slips through the cracks.

How exquisite your love, O God! How eager we are to run under your wings,
To eat our fill at the banquet you spread. Amen.