

The Wine of Our Lives

Jesus' first miracle, at a Marriage Feast at Cana of Galilee, is described in John 2:1-11. When the wine runs out at the multi-day party, Mary asks him to solve the problem. His solution was to turn 150 gallons of water into wine.

Perhaps you have experienced times in your life when you felt the wine had run out. Your boss greets you and tells you to clean out your desk. Your last child leaves home and you're eaten up by loneliness. Perhaps your marriage is coming apart. A sense of hopelessness invades you. The wine, all that is good and desirable, all that gives meaning to life, runs out.

When the wine of our lives runs out, the party is not over. God continues to break into our lives. At such moments, hope is reborn. In the care and support offered by neighbors and friends when we suffer a great loss, in the person who listens when no one else will, in the sweet taste of forgiveness, in new love that comes to an exhausted marriage, in the renewal of spirit, the discovery of a reason for being, we see something of God's glory. The ordinary turns extraordinary and water becomes wine.

It is important, however, to look at the process by which Jesus was led to turn the water to wine. Mary is our model. First we must reach out to people, as Mary turned to Jesus. It can be embarrassing to ask others for help. But it is important. If we are sick and need help, ask for assistance. If we have marital or other family problems, don't keep them inside; let them out and talk them out. If you have lost your job, it is a proven fact that the best way to find a new one is to network, asking others if they know of any openings any where. And if our faith is diminished for any reason, it helps to let others pray with and for us. All this can be embarrassing. This is where Pride becomes a sin and shuts God out. It limits His ability to turn the water of our lives into the finest wine. Second, we must reach to God, as Mary turned to her divine Son. We should pray for our problems. God wants us to come to Him with all our problems, even running out of wine at a party. Finally, expect a Miracle! Ask for God's help and be open to God's will. Mary didn't tell Jesus to turn water into wine. She just told him the problem and asked Him to take care of it. Don't be so sure that your God is too busy to worry about your Super Bowl party running out of wine. Our God is at work every day, every moment. God wants to turn the emptiness of pain and difficulty in our lives into wonderful wine.

The Rev. Bert Eaton is Rector of St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Swansboro.