

Epiphany 2 – God saves the best for last

1. Are you a person who prefers to get good news before bad or the bad before the good?
 - a. It's interesting how often in our lives we are presented with that option – sometimes in matters most trivial in others very grave.
 - i. But what news you want to hear first probably says something about your personality
 - ii. In my case, I can't think of a time when I wanted the good news first, I want to be given the bad stuff first so that hopefully the good will in some way offset it
 - iii. But many people want the good news first hoping that it will prepare them to receive the bad.
 - iv. I can't imagine there's a right or wrong or good vs bad here, in these situations it's probably just a matter of preference
 - b. But in our Gospel lesson from the wedding feast at Cana we can see that in our Lord's case the best was saved for last
 - i. When we place our faith in God's promises we know that whatever is best will in fact be the outcome even if we can't see it from our vantage point.
 - ii. We are promised this throughout Scripture that God saves the best for last!
2. Let's take a closer look at our Gospel lesson which takes place at the beginning of our Lord's ministry
 - a. John records, **“On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.”** (Jn 2:1)
 - i. This is the third day since Jesus was at the Jordan river and John proclaimed, **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”** (Jn 1:36)
 - ii. Today we find Jesus attending a wedding and history records that the wedding feast typically lasted seven days with many guests remaining the whole week, abstaining from work.
 - iii. There could be a whole sermon on the incarnational aspect of Jesus attending a wedding, being with His creation in the joys and sorrows of life, but that's for another time.
 - b. We suspect that Mary may have been related to the host family, or a close friend because she comes to Jesus with news that other guests wouldn't have had, **“They have no wine.”** (Jn 2:3)
 - i. This is a major faux pas in first century Israel, it reflects very poorly on the host who either didn't plan well or was too cheap to buy enough wine!
 - ii. We don't know what Mary thought Jesus could do because we learn later in the text *AFTER* the miracle that **“this was the first of the signs that He did**

to manifest His glory,” (Jn 2:11) so He wasn’t known as a miracle worker, yet.

- iii. But Mary had faith, faith that something would be done even though she couldn’t know the outcome from the beginning.
 - c. So, it is with us - we are promised good from God’s Word even in the middle of whatever trouble we may be in even when we can’t see the end from the beginning.
 - i. Listen to one of the better-known promises from Paul in Rom 8, **“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”** (Rom 8:28)
 - ii. Over and over throughout Scripture God bids us to put our trust in Him that all things will be to our benefit that indeed He has saved the best for last for those who trust in Him!
 - d. As we return to our text, we see that this is exactly what happened at the wedding feast for the unknown host.
 - i. Jesus tells the servants to fill up the six stone jars with water (this was probably about 20-30 gallons each) and take it to the master of the feast.
 - ii. Can you imagine being one of those servants who thought he was taking water to the master because this carpenter’s son told you to?
 - iii. And yet somewhere in those intervening moments the water becomes wine, and the banquet is saved! (so is the host)
 - iv. And the master of the feast says to the bridegroom, **“Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.”** (Jn 1:10) – you saved the best for last
3. I want to use what we see in the Gospel as a jumping off point because that is exactly what our Lord promises us as well, (not that He’s going to save our bacon when we fail to plan for a social event, don’t study for a test, etc) but that He really does save the best for last for us
- a. We can be assured that no matter what happens here as the Word and Promise of Rom 8 says all things will work together for good.
 - i. But that promise is not only for this life but even more so for our eternal life to come.
 - ii. Again, hear the promises of Scripture that reveal God has saved the best for last.
 - iii. From I Cor, **“no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.”** (1Co 2:9)

- iv. Or another from Rom, “**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**” (Rom 8:18)
- b. Do you think you have a good life now? I don’t doubt it, many of us (I’m including myself here) have been unbelievably blessed.
 - i. Not just materially but with family, friends, whatever metric you want to use and the thought of that ending is terrifying.
 - ii. We ask ourselves, “What do I have to look forward to...what will heaven be like...etc?” because we’re afraid to take God at his word.
 - iii. But that just shows our weak, faithlessness – God’s promise is that you can’t even **begin** to imagine what He has in store for you no matter how grand and comfortable and enjoyable and wonderful your life is now.
 - iv. Conversely if you’re life has been just the opposite of that you too have everything to look forward to, none of us will be left out or left wanting
- c. How do we know that we can absolutely count on that promise? Because of the great lengths the Father went to in order to secure our salvation.
 - i. This is what He says through Paul, “**He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**” (Rom 8:32)
 - ii. Paul’s saying if God went that far to forgive us in giving up His Son how can we imagine that He won’t fulfill all that He promises – would He have done so much for us only to pull back on His promises at the end?
- d. And Scripture does give us a glimpse of what we have to look forward to
 - i. Listen to what John heard and saw in Revelation, **Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.** (Rev 21:3-4)
 - ii. Brothers and sisters in Christ your hope, your refuge, your treasure is in heaven so that when you’ve passed through the valley of the shadow of death that is this life you will exclaim with the steward at the wedding feast, **You have saved the best for last!**