**Humouring the Wine**

Most weddings taken in the Church of England have a reference to the Wedding at Cana. We don’t know much about the wedding. We don’t know the names of the bride and groom. It was their big day . . . or rather big week, as Jewish custom at that time called for a feast that lasted **six days**.

So, Jesus goes to this wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. The Gospel says that he was there with his mother. It also indicates that Jesus’ disciples were there. It also indicates that Jesus had not yet begun his active ministry.

So, we can conclude that while Jesus had begun calling his disciples, he was still living near his mother.

Now, **essence** of this story is made apparent in the third sentence:

**“When the wine ran out, Jesus’ mother said to him, ‘They have no wine'” (2:3).**

The bride and groom ran out of wine for their guests! —nothing worse could possibly happen! It was expected that the food and the wine would flow continuously during this **week-long** party. Imagine being the young couple who would be remembered as the ones at who’s wedding the wine ran out!

So, now – somehow - Mary gets to know. Perhaps she noticed the anxious steward or perhaps she noticed some guests who were getting a bit upset. She gets up from her seat and casually walks over to where Jesus is sitting with his disciples. And she says to him,

**“They have no wine”**—meaning, **“Son, this is serious. Do something.”**

Let’s pause here for a moment, because there might be a message hidden in this Gospel lesson that we are likely to miss. It’s a message for us to be able smile - to be able to find **humour** in the Bible. Sometimes—you know—it’s okay to laugh—or at least smile—just a little bit. Perhaps this Gospel lesson is one of those times.

We are not trying to **make light** of this Gospel message, but we need to view it through the eyes of Jesus’ humanity — **particularly** with regard to Jesus’ relationship with his mother - because this moment is a **priceless** moment. It is a classic moment - the kind that often occurs between a mother and her adult son.

**Picture this situation.** Here’s Jesus, sitting with his new disciples. They’re eating good food, drinking some wine, laughing, getting to know each other better — having a really good time. Mary’s been off with her friends eating and laughing and having a nice time, too --- when, somehow she realizes that the party has just run out of wine.

So, what does she do? She gets up, tells the wine steward to follow her, she walks herself over to her son — she taps him on the shoulder, and she says**, “They have no wine.”**

Now, if we are mothers who **have** adult sons or **are** adult sons — let’s try to visualize this moment. Try to visualize facial expressions and reactions that we are familiar with. Let’s picture this interaction while visualizing our own experiences.

Mary doesn’t say, **“They have no wine. Is there anything you can do?”** She just says, **“They have no wine.”** then she stands there **staring at Jesus**.

You can almost hear the implied, **“Get up out of that chair and do something.”** She doesn’t just **THINK** Jesus might be able to do something; she absolutely – unquestioningly -- **KNOWS he WILL** do something.

That’s **faith** my friends; that’s faith. But it is also just a little funny when you put it in the context of mother and adult son.

And how does Jesus respond? Well, it sounds more than just a little rude, but here again, remember, this is mother and adult son. Jesus responds:

**“Woman, what does that have to do with you and me?  
My hour has not yet come.”**

Now, from my own experiences with my own mother, the look that Mary most likely gave Jesus at that moment probably would have curled his hair - or **singed it off**.

It doesn’t matter how old you are, as a **son** one does not dismiss one’s mother with that kind of statement. -- There’s also that inconvenient, little commandment . .

**“Honour your father AND YOUR MOTHER.”**

Jesus probably knew without any doubt at that moment, that he had better do something and do it quickly, if he knew what was good for him. Such is the power of a mother throughout one’s life.

So, Mary does what any good mother would have done—after giving him **THE LOOK**. She just puts him on the spot in a way that he can’t get out of. She turns to the servants and says,

**“Whatever he says to you, do it”** (2:5). Then with another meaningful look at her son, she goes back to enjoying the party with her friends.

And once we’ve understood the humour, we can go back and have better appreciation for the enormity of what has just happened here. Think about what Mary has just done. She has just kick-started Jesus’ ministry — a ministry that will lead to our salvation.

You see, Jesus was hesitating here. God the Father had sent him into the world on a world-saving mission, but he didn’t yet feel that the time had come for him to reveal himself. But his mother knew. She knew that the time had come. She was pushing him into a place that he was still hesitating to go. He didn’t feel ready, but she knew he was.

**Mothers always know!**

Just as any mother knows her son; Mary knew Jesus. She didn’t argue with him. She didn’t cajole. She just said to the servants**, “Whatever he says to you, do it.”** She knew that he would step up and help.

So, the moment came. Jesus began his ministry with a **sign**. A sign that may seem a bit innocuous in the grand scheme of things.

a sign that may seem trivial when compared with other signs he gave.

He didn’t think he was really ready yet, but his mother knew he was.

He saw six huge, stone water jars designed for holding water - water that would be used for the rites of purification - for cleansing. So, being the good son and not wanting to get on the bad side of his mother, he tells the servants to fill the jars with water, and these men—who are probably also having a few sniggers at that point—take these huge jars and fill them to the brim with water. Then Jesus says,

**“Now draw some out, and take it to the ruler of the feast”**(2:8).

**That’s it**. That’s all he does. No prayers. No waving of hands. Just, **“take it to the chief steward.”** So the servants do. The chief steward tastes the wine and says,

**“Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have drunk freely, then that which is worse. You have kept the good wine until now!”** (2:10).

The author of this Gospel finishes the story by saying,

“This beginning of his signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee,  
and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him” (2:11).

But there is so much more to this story. The writer needed us to understand - and I think he did it intentionally with some humour - he needed to provide us with starting point that showed Jesus as being - **at the same time**

- **fully human** and fully **divine**. From this point, it becomes more difficult to sort out the ***fully human*** when we view Jesus’ ministry. But here, at the very beginning, it’s readily apparent.

And that’s important for us because we need to understand that Jesus -- in being fully human - **God as human** -- Jesus knows who we are, how we feel, how we react; he knows **what it’s like to be us.**

That’s important for us to understand, because when we understand Jesus as being **fully human** AND **fully divine**, then we begin to understand better just what his sacrifice means for us.

Because as **fully divine - as God -** he has the power to save us from our sins,

but as fully human he knows exactly what it meant to suffer for us **in order to** save us.

**And that is the greatest gift we could receive.**

**AMEN**