

**Sunday 16 January 2022**  
**Holy Trinity – Holy Communion (8.00am)**  
**Epiphany 2**

Isaiah 62:1-5

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

The story of the wedding at Cana is an intriguing one. The dynamic between Jesus and his mother is also fascinating, as is the nature of the miracle itself. It is completely absent from the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke with John as the only Gospel writer to mention this episode at all.

There is something else that seems to be missing from the Gospel accounts and that is any real mention of Jesus' childhood. In this case it is only Luke who has anything to say and that is the story of Jesus as a 12 year old boy in the temple at Jerusalem.

Could that be because not very much happened?

Well, the interaction between Jesus and his mother in our Gospel passage today does perhaps suggest that Jesus' childhood was not completely ordinary. Why did Mary expect Jesus to be able to do anything about the empty wine jars?

What did she know about him?

John's Gospel doesn't tell us.

What it does show is a gradual building of Jesus' ministry.

The previous chapter describes the calling of the first disciples and shows Jesus as an attractive, teasing, compelling figure. People are clearly drawn to him, and when they are with him, they know they are at the heart of something incredible.

And then comes this lovely, happy wedding story.

Jesus is there with his friends, who are already, it seems, a recognised group all invited to this wedding together.

Mary, the bossy, affectionate mother takes no notice of Jesus' attempts to avoid any kind of sign or miracle. "My hour has not yet come", he tells her. But Mary clearly feels that it is her place to decide when his hour has come, not his. She almost treats him a bit like a sulky boy, who just needs humouring and cajoling into performing.

And perform he does.

Why does he do it?

Only Mary, the servants and the disciples know what has really happened.

Does it set up all kinds of false impressions in the minds of his new band of followers?

Does Mary expect to continue to control his ministry?

Do the disciples congratulate themselves on throwing in their lot with someone who is going to give them such a good time?

Well, if they did, it all came quickly crashing down because, shortly after this episode, we read about Jesus charging around the temple upsetting the tables and throwing out the money changers.

Any thought that this might be a bit of a joy ride for the disciples would have been dispelled instantly.

So what, two thousand years later, do we make of all this?

This miracle of turning water into wine is noted as Jesus' first miracle.

But this is not just one miracle among many; it is the premier miracle - it is the key to interpreting everything that followed.

Coming to a community where a special celebration has literally run dry and is powerless to renew itself, Jesus is revealed as the one who both fills up and transforms what is empty.

There is a generous abundance, an abundance to the point of excess.

There is a quality beyond anything else that has been experienced.

Just imagine the bewilderment of the steward in the story and the utter confusion of the groom on being congratulated for suddenly producing such exceptional wine.

We, however, don't need to be in any way bewildered or confused.

Here we see just what kind of Messiah Jesus is.

Here we have a picture of the new life he came to bring to people who are contaminated by sin (that's to say, you and me).

A life that is as intoxicating as new wine and as different from the old life as wine is different from water.

**Amen.**