

John 2:1-11

How is your **patience quotient**? Do you think you have **a lot** of patience? Can you put up with someone who's taking his or her **sweet time** to get ready to go somewhere, or do you immediately get **frustrated** and offer some "encouragement" to get them **moving**? Can you enjoy a **conversation** in a restaurant while you are **waiting** for your food, or do you feel the urge to grab the waiter by the collar and say, "Give me my dinner"? **Patience** is frequently something which is in **short supply**, so **increasing** our patience is something that we, as Christians, are **always** working on. But in reality, we aren't even **able** to increase our patience, because after all, **patience** is a fruit of the **Spirit**. Today I'd like to **explore** the topic of patience a bit, and I don't mean patience with our **family** members, or **friends**, or even with **strangers**. Rather, I'd like to explore how patient we are with our **God**. Sometimes - perhaps **most** of the time - it's very **difficult** to **possess** this quality, but it's always **important** for us to remember that God will accomplish His will **In His Time - For His Purpose**.

Our sermon text for today takes us to the scene of a **wedding celebration** at **Cana** in Galilee. As we start out, it's good for us to **understand** a little bit about the **marriage customs** of that time. Although marriage became a **binding contract** at the time when the bride and groom were **betrothed** or **engaged**, they didn't actually **live together** as husband and wife, until after a period of about a **year**. At that time, the groom would go, with a large group of his **friends**, and he would get his bride from her **family home**. The whole party would then return to the **groom's** parents' house for a simple **ceremony** followed by a large **celebration** - a celebration which could last as long as a **week**. Of course, **feeding** such a large group of people for such a long period of time would take a lot of **planning**, and would incur a lot of **expense**. Apparently, in the case of the wedding in our text for today, the **planning** hadn't been done all that **well**, or perhaps the groom simply didn't have the **resources** to provide what was **expected**. Either way, Mary sensed the impending **embarrassment** for the groom as the supply of **wine** ran out. So, she went to **Jesus**, and asked Him to **do** something to **correct** the situation.

Her **request** took the form of a **statement**. She simply told Jesus: "*They have no more wine.*" However, from Jesus' **response** to Mary, we know exactly what she **meant**. She wanted Jesus to **solve** the problem in a way that only Jesus **could** - by performing a **miracle**. That's why Jesus spoke to her the way He did, "*Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet*

*come.*” Jesus’ words offered a mild **rebuke** to Mary. She wanted Jesus to use His power as the **Son of God** to spare the groom some **embarrassment**. But, Mary needed to realize that the decision of **when** and **how** Jesus would use His power was not **hers** to make. Jesus would **only** use that power at the **appointed** time, in accordance with the heavenly **Father’s** will.

There are times when **we** act a lot like Mary. God has given us the privilege of coming to Him in **prayer**, and He has promised that He will **hear** us. We **also** know that God has the **power** to do all things. So, sometimes we fall into the **trap** of trying to tell God **when** and **how** to handle the problems we experience in life. We want Him to **act**, and we want Him to act **now** - in accordance with **our** will and **our** desire. And then when God **doesn’t** act in the way we **want** Him to, we may begin to **doubt** Him, or to **resent** His solution, or even to **wonder** whether God had even bothered to **listen** to us in the first place.

Like Mary, we need to realize that it is not up to **us** to tell God **when** or **how** to act. We go to Him in **prayer**. We **ask** for His **help**, but it’s important for us to ask according to **His** will, and to **recognize** that **God’s** will is not always exactly **in line** with **our** will. **We** might want something solved right **now**, but **God** might want to **wait**. That **doesn’t** mean that God doesn’t **love** us, or that He doesn’t **listen** to us. God will act in **His** time, and according to **His** purpose, and it’s **sinful** for us to call His actions into **question**; or to **doubt** His **care** for us, or His **ability** to help us. When we start to lose our **patience** with God, and think those sinful **thoughts**, then once again it’s time for us to **repent**, to receive **forgiveness** from Jesus, and to wait **patiently** on the **LORD’s** reply to whatever our problem might be.

Let’s take a look at how Jesus helped in our text for today. Although Jesus had told Mary that His **time** had not yet **come**, it didn’t take very long before Jesus sprang into **action**. We’re pretty familiar with the **details** of this miracle. Jesus told the servants to fill six large jars with **water**. These jars would have held between 20 and 30 gallons **each**. That was going to mean a lot of extra **work** for the servants, but they did it anyway. Then Jesus told them to draw out some of the water, and to take it to the master of the banquet. When they **did**, the banquet-master was **amazed** that although he had **thought** all the wine was **gone**, suddenly some very **fine wine** had appeared on the scene - and no doubt the **servants** were **equally** as amazed.

There are **two** aspects of this miracle which make it **extraordinary**. First of all there is the **amount** of water that Jesus turned into wine - six large containers, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. This wasn't just a **pitcher** of wine which Jesus provided, it was about **150 gallons** of wine. This was an amount that would not only provide for the need at the **wedding celebration**, but it would also provide about **a year's supply** of wine for use in the bride and groom's new home. The **other** amazing aspect of this miracle is the **quality** of the wine that was produced. The master of the banquet was a wine **connoisseur**, and he immediately **recognized** that this wine was far **better** than the wine they had been serving previously. This was truly an **amazing** miracle - a miracle which was performed at just the **right** time - **God's** time.

I think it's important to note that there was **another** purpose for Jesus performing this miracle. He **didn't** do it to **only** avoid a potentially embarrassing situation for the groom, but rather, as we hear in our text, "*Jesus thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.*" Saving the day at the wedding banquet was **not** the **most** important factor for Jesus. Instead, He wanted to show His **disciples**, and anyone **else** who witnessed this miracle, that He truly was the **Son of God**. What Jesus did on that day was something that no **ordinary** human being could do. The disciples **understood**, that this great **power** pointed to the truth that Jesus was the **Messiah** - the world's **Savior** - and they put their **faith** in Him.

Jesus has revealed His glory to **us** as well. On the pages of Holy Scriptures, **we** are allowed to see Jesus perform **miracles** and **wonders**, and so we **also** know that He truly is the **Son of God**. Of course, the **greatest** power Jesus has shown to us is found at the **cross** and the **empty tomb** - assuring us that He conquered the power of **sin**, **death** and even the **devil**. Sometimes we want so **badly** for God to help us with our **day-to-day** problems in life, that we **forget** that important **fact**. Even if He would never do **anything else** in order to help us, Jesus has **already** helped us far **beyond** our wildest dreams. Jesus has given us the **forgiveness** of sins, and **eternal life**, by sacrificing His **perfect** life, and shedding His **innocent** blood. No further **proof** of God's glory will ever be **needed**. These signs remind us that we have a **wonderful** and **loving** God, who deeply **cares** about us, even when sometimes we don't **feel** like He **hears** us or **cares** about us.

And as if the cross and the empty tomb were not **enough**, God reveals His glory in our lives in **other** ways too. He **does** graciously help us with our **day-to-day** problems, no matter how **small** and **insignificant** they might be in

the overall scheme of things. His help might not always match **our** timeline, and it might not come exactly in the way we **thought** it would, but God's help will come **In His Time - For His Purpose**, just as it did with His very **first** miracle in Cana.

And what **is** His purpose? There are actually **many** different ways in which Jesus turns **water** into **wine** in our lives. But ultimately, Jesus wants to draw us closer to **Him**, and to **preserve** us as His own; until we can finally go and live with Him **forever** in heaven. How He accomplishes that purpose is sometimes **surprising**, and sometimes **frustrating** to our impatient nature. Praying "*Your will be done, Lord*" requires **patience**, and it requires **faith**, but God's timing is **always** best. May we continue to enjoy the **grace** and the **mercy** which God extends to us each and every day. Amen.