

Epiphany #2 Baptism of Jesus

1-16-2022

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“The Sundays after Epiphany continue to celebrate the revelation of God’s glory to us as it was made known to the magi and to those on Jordan’s banks at Jesus’ baptism – today using wedding imagery. Our God rejoices over God’s people as those being married rejoice over one another. By the power of the Spirit there are gifts galore for anyone. In Christ Jesus the best wine is saved for last. Taste and see.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Word of God. Come on Earth”](#)

Psalmody: Psalm 36:5-10

“Thy steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
thy faithfulness to the clouds.

⁶Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God,
thy judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast thou savest, O Lord.

⁷How precious is thy steadfast love, O God!
The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings.

⁸They feast on the abundance of thy house,
and thou givest them drink from the river of thy delights.

⁹For with thee is the fountain of life;
in thy light do we see light.

¹⁰O continue thy steadfast love to those who know thee,
and thy salvation to the upright of heart!”

Hymn of Praise: [“Alleluia, Song of Gladness”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find life together on him. Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Isaiah 62:1-5](#)

2nd Reading: [1 Corinthians 12:1-11](#)

The Gospel: [John 2:1-11](#)

Hymn: ["O Word of God Incarnate"](#)

The Message: [\(Video Link\)](#)

Today in our gospel lesson John gives us a view of Jesus which is somewhat unique in the gospels. It tells the story of Jesus celebrating at a wedding along with family and friends. We all can identify with this for we have attended weddings ourselves throughout our lifetime and know that they can be happy times for all. Weddings are experiencing and sharing in the love proclaimed by a couple and then celebrating this happy occasion. Stylist Brad Goreski once said, "I love weddings: happy people coming together to celebrate in great clothes." Weddings are a very important part of life. Anne Hathaway has said, "Weddings are important because they celebrate life and possibility."

In some ways weddings over the years of my lifetime have changed. For instance, wedding venues have been moving away from the church to favorite places outdoors, hotels, resorts and the favorite location of the couple. Although always expensive, they now reach phenomenal amounts. Most weddings today have wedding coordinators which take care of details and do everything but perform the ceremony. By the way they have taken away many of the headaches of weddings from the minister or officiate of the ceremony. But, regardless of the changes which are occurring, a wedding is one of the biggest functions which the family and extended family can celebrate together. Of course as the old saying goes, families are assured to see each other at weddings and funerals - but anybody would prefer the wedding anytime.

We are not alone in our celebration of a wedding for every society has this in common no matter the region of the world. The traditions associated with weddings vary and in many cases their celebrations out-do ours.

In truth weddings have been one of the biggest social functions in almost every society throughout history. In some small villages and towns a wedding is a social function for everybody. It is almost like a holiday. In fact, in some societies in history a wedding was just that a several day holiday, this was the case with the Jews during Jesus' time. The wedding and subsequent celebration and feasts could last up to a week. You can imagine what that would cost. It should be a relief to some parents that such a practice is not observed in our society.

The wedding tradition at that time was that by law a virgin was to be married on a Wednesday. It is interesting that the actual wedding ceremony didn't take place until late in the evening after a feast which was given by the groom's father. According to one source, after the ceremony the couple would be paraded through the streets in a torch lighted procession. They would not take a direct route to the new couple's home but would wander through the streets in order to allow everybody to extend their best wishes to the bride and groom. For a week the couple would wear crowns and their wedding garments for they were considered to be king and queen for the town during that week. The celebration continued throughout the week with

a daily open house at the newlyweds. That of course would mean food and drink. For the towns and villages in which the economic conditions may have been less than desirable such festivities would be much anticipated and enjoyed.

This then was a great responsibility for the groom since he did not want to be dishonored by not living up to the traditional expectations. Such great festivities would have involved the contribution of many within the circle of family, friends, and neighbors. It seems as though the people had specialized functions almost like caterers today. In the story of the wedding at Cana this becomes evident.

Cana was a nearby village to Nazareth and the wedding family in Cana was most likely closely associated with Jesus' family for Mary seemed to have been a key player in this wedding. One source said that she could even have been in charge of the wine. It is interesting that Joseph is not mentioned but it is felt that he had died sometime before. Wine was always a key part of any Jewish feast and festivities since it was said that "Without wine there is no Joy". Therefore when the wine ran out this could have been a disaster to the celebration and humiliation to the groom. This is when Mary stepped in and presented the problem to her son, Jesus, "They have no wine." Jesus response has been translated in various ways "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?" "Your concern, mother, is not mine." Or, "Do not try to direct me." Regardless was Jesus trying to be a party pooper. Didn't Jesus like to have a good time along with everyone else?

That isn't the question or else He would not have been at the celebration in the first place. But He and His disciples were there participating in the good times. Therefore, Jesus wasn't putting off His mother for that reason but as He said, "My hour has not yet come." Or as one translation says "It is not the right time to act." That is, I am not ready to give signs of who I am. Jesus seemed to be very reluctant at that time, the very beginning of His ministry, to reveal Himself. But, His mother would have none of that. She knew in one way or another Jesus could solve the problem after all He had kept the family going since the apparent death of Joseph. She ignored Jesus response and forced His hand. Since she had been a part of God's incarnation from the very beginning, she must have known that nothing was beyond His capability. She instructed the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Here is Mary's human response for what mother doesn't have faith in her children. But was it more than a mother's response? Did she force Him to reveal who He was as foretold to Mary.

John tells us that there were six stone water jars used for the cleansing rites of purification each of which would hold twenty to thirty gallons.) Just think of the size of a 30 gallon trash can.) Jesus instructed the servants to fill the jars to the brim with water. That would have been no small task since the water would have to be drawn from a well. He then told them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." They did as He told them. The steward then complimented the bridegroom "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." What a party, 120 to 180 gallons of wine! That must have been some kind of celebration if you could remember it.

But John used this sign of Jesus for another purpose. According to the Jewish tradition the number seven means complete and perfect. The number six would mean incomplete, unfinished or imperfect. The six jars symbolized all of the imperfections of the Jewish law. Jesus came to fulfill this law with the perfection of the new wine, the new revelation of God's word, God's grace. Just as the six full jars of wine was more than enough for the people of that feast, so too is God's grace more than enough to fill the lives of all people who come to Him.

This first sign of Jesus is a carry-over of all that happened surrounding His birth and childhood for it came amidst the common people during a very human thing, celebrating a wedding. John tells us that Jesus enters our lives amidst common daily human activities and helps us meet the challenges of our encounters and shortcomings. God's revelation goes far beyond what tradition calls sacred institutions into the very core of life. In Jesus imperfections are made perfect. There is no limitation to God's grace and no need on this earth is too great for God's grace to fulfill. This is the revelation which brings forth new wine so that we may not only celebrate a lifetime of God's love but an eternity of such a life.

He assures us that even during these troubling times God's loving presence, his abundant grace, is alive and well. God has not abandoned those who have been caught in the tragedies of life but is reaching out to all his children throughout the world. Through all the trials of life God's love, his abundant grace comes alive and is made known. Contrary to what many may say God at this present time is turning water into the abundance of new wine of new life through you and me. We are a vital part of this sign to the troubled world in which we live. As evidence of this sign we must continue to celebrate life even though it may be changed.

Anthem: ["Miracle at Cana"](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer:

God whose presence is eternal, during times of trial, turmoil and distress we need to turn to your presence in order to find our way through the darkness. Tragically sometimes we may just give up and become determined to accept and be governed by the darkness which life can present. Give us the wisdom and insight to find ways not only to endure the troubling times but to find ways to celebrate the life which you have given us.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, Leo Dickel, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, Dotty Gibson, Kraig Greff, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz,

Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family,, Della , Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein,, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack,
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"](#)

Announcements

Sunday service is at 9:30 AM

Lady Terps Game. Sunday, January 23rd at 1:00 PM Tickets \$27.00 – Children and Young People Free. Must have Vaccination Card and Photo ID or negative test proof (Not applicable for under 12) see Bob Hardy for tickets.

Please note that Masks are required while in the church building.

*Offering to be sent to
Robert Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291

