**Wedding Glitches**

**Psalm 36:5-10**

**John 2:1-11**

6/21/15

Thought for Meditation:

“We must never believe the lie that says that the details of our lives are not the proper content of prayer.” *Prayer, Richard Foster*

“I think it’s significant that common folk in a little town enjoyed being with Jesus… His faith made him likable, not detestable. Would that ours would do the same!” *When God Whispers*

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On Tuesday Tanya and I will celebrate our 31st anniversary. We had a rather unique wedding. We had planned it perfectly – or so we thought. I remember coming out from the side, watching Tanya process down the aisle. We walked up the steps and the service began. Gary, the pastor, was in the middle of giving a message when he fainted. He collapsed into my arms. I laid him on the ground. My first thought was, "He's having a heart attack." I knew Gary would get good care. In our wedding party we had a doctor, a paramedic and two nurses. There was also an undertaker at the wedding who was a family friend. Gary jokes about waking up and seeing the undertaker standing over him. Actually, all he did was bring up some smelling salts. We found out that Gary was sick. He had the flu.

 Gary thought he could continue the service. They were bringing a chair up for him to sit in, but before it got there he collapsed again. This time a couple of the guys picked him up and carried him out. At that point I was wondering what we were going to do. Fortunately, another family friend who was at the wedding was a pastor. Mr. Charlie came up and finished the service. Tanya and I directed him through the rest of the service. Our wedding was very memorable. Those who were there will probably never forget it. The same thing is true of a wedding that took place 2000 years ago in the town of Cana.

 2000 years ago weddings in the middle-east were different than weddings today. They usually started on Wednesday with a procession through the town. These processions were at night, with people carrying torches. They would go through the whole village, by every home, inviting everyone to join. They would go to the synagogue for the religious ceremony. The procession ended at the home of the bridegroom, where the couple would live. Then there was a feast. We think of a big wedding reception as a sit-down dinner at the country club. That's nothing compared to a middle-eastern reception. It was a party that would last for 7 days. There was lots of food and lots of wine. The problem at this wedding was that the wine ran out.

 In the middle-east, hospitality was a sacred duty. A host was expected to do anything to show hospitality to a guest. Wine was an essential part of a feast. It wasn’t that the people got drunk, but for most people wine was reserved for special occasions as a way to celebrate. To run out of wine at a wedding was a great shame. It would be a catastrophe. It would put a stigma on the new couple. They would almost become outcasts.

 Mary found out about the wine running out. She went to Jesus and told him about the problem. He gently rebuked her. "That isn't our problem. Let them take care of it." Yet Mary was persistent. With incredible faith she told the servants to do whatever Jesus said. There were 6 jars there, each holding 20 to 30 gallons. Jesus told the servants to fill them with water. The water then turned to wine and the party was saved. This wedding glitch did not humiliate the new couple.

 I want you to use your imagination for a moment. Picture a small group of men walking along a country road in Palestine. They are following a rabbi they had just met a few days earlier. He had called them to follow him, but they didn’t know where they were going.

 John thought they were going out into the desert. They would go out to fast and pray. It would be a time of solitude and contemplation. Truly spiritual people spent time alone in the desert. It was a place where you could face your demons and a place to meet God.

 Peter had different idea. He was a man who liked to talk. He liked words. He said that they were probably going to preach someplace. They would go out and find a crowd and tell them about the Messiah. They would proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven.

 James had another idea. He had a fire inside and a hatred of the unrighteous. He suggested that they would begin to carry out God’s judgment. Maybe they would go to the Temple and clean it up. They would preach against the hypocrites and condemn all the unbelievers.

 Andrew was a man of action. He thought they were headed out on a mission trip. They were going to work among the poor. They would feed the hungry, build homes for the homeless. Maybe there would even be a miracle, some sort of healing.

 They argued amongst themselves for a while until one of them asked. “Hey Jesus, where are we going?” Jesus said, “We are going to a wedding!”

 Years later that same group of men were sitting around trying to figure out how they would tell the story about Jesus. They wanted to write it down so everyone could remember all of his preaching and teaching, and all of his miracles. One of them said, “Do you remember Jesus’ first miracle. It was at that wedding when he turned the water into wine? What was the point of that?” Most of Jesus’ miracles have some sort of a purpose or message. He fed 5000 people with a few loaves of bread and said, “I am the bread of life.” He raised Lazarus from the dead and said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” He healed people to show that he had power over the evil forces of our world.

Here’s my question about today’s passage – “So what? What is the point of turning water into wine?” It’s impressive, but it seems rather insignificant. It isn’t religious. Jesus didn’t even want to do this. Why did he end up bothering with such a small matter?

 Maybe the message for us from this story is just that; Jesus is concerned about the small details of our lives. God wants to be involved in every part of our lives, even those which seem unimportant or insignificant. To the rest of the world a problem may seem trivial and unimportant. But if it matters to us, it matters to God. God cares about us so much that if we consider something important, God does too.

 A little girl and her Mom were walking down the Boardwalk at Ocean City, New Jersey. It was a hot afternoon and both of them had ice cream cones. The little girl had a huge scoop of Candy Cane ice cream. It was hot enough outside that within a few minutes the cone would melt and drip all over the place, so mom suggested the little girl eat it quickly. She gave it a big lick, and as she did so the ice cream fell off the cone onto the hot boardwalk. The little girl was devastated. She couldn’t stop crying. Her Mom said not to worry about it, they would go get another one, but that didn't help. The girl wanted the ice cream that had fallen off her cone.

 Most adults would think, "Bummer, I lost my ice cream cone. I guess I'll have to buy another one." To a 3 year-old child that type of reasoning doesn’t work. Part of that is because 3 year-old kids haven't learned to reason very well. Part of that is because most adults have learned how to deny their feelings. We are taught from the time we are little kids, "Big boys don't cry. Don't be upset. Don't be angry. Don't feel pain. Don't have feelings." We are embarrassed by our feelings and are afraid that they won't be acknowledged or accepted.

 The good news of our story this morning is that God doesn't deny our feelings. The issues and struggles that matter to us matter to God, even if they seem insignificant to everyone else. If it makes us hurt, Jesus hurts with us. We don't need to be ashamed of our feelings, or afraid of them. Jesus loves each one of us so much that he wants to be involved in every part of our lives. There is nothing too small, too ordinary, or too unimportant for God, because we are important to God.

 Here is another way to think about this. Because God wants to be involved in every aspect of our lives we don't need to wait for a major crisis to talk to God or to think about our faith. One of the great tragedies of life is that people often separate their faith from the rest of their lives. When they come to church, and maybe when they say their prayers, they think about God. The rest of the time they put God in a little religious box and don't think about God's involvement in the rest of their lives. We have a work box for when we are at work. We have a family box, a chore box, and all sorts of other boxes. We have a free-time box for our hobbies and activities. Then we have our God box – those times when we want to be spiritual and think about God. God is in this one box, but not in all our other boxes.

Then a crisis comes along and our faith isn't strong enough to carry us through it. We blame God for not being with us, but we haven’t learned how to be aware of God's presence in our everyday lives. God wants to be involved in every aspect of your life. God wants you to know that he is with you when you are driving to work, when you’re pulling weeds from your garden, sitting in a business meeting, or fixing dinner. Don't wait for a major crisis to look for God. God is with you all day, every day.

 Jesus went to a wedding party. They ran out of wine and Jesus turned water into wine. It's a simple, yet profound story. It shows us that God loves us and wants to be involved in our lives. May Jesus touch each one of our lives with his love and glory, and may our lives be filled with joy and faith.