

Text: John 2:1-11 NRSV

Message: ***Finding grace in spite of anxiety*** Pastor Riva Tabelisma

Please join me in prayer.

Hide me in your glory, gracious and loving God. And may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, my redeemer, and my refuge. Amen.

In May 2020, I came across a news that households in Castelvetro, Italy were surprised one morning when wine instead of water came out of their faucets. I shared this news in my social media with the caption – ‘Jesus did it again’. And yes, today’s passage is the reference of that joke. But the reason why this happened was because the pipes of a winery burst into the water reserve of the town. As an event planner, one of the toughest parties/events to plan is a wedding party because there is so much that can go wrong. Mishaps can happen out of nowhere, sometimes they end up as funny misfortunes, sometimes it causes for knots in the stomach when being remembered. Reading our passage today actually brings me back to that place of events planning where things that can go wrong will go wrong. How can a wedding party or banquet run out of a vital element of an important party? Especially in a culture that wine symbolizes celebration, festivities and wishes of great fortune for two people who are about to start their lives together. But like in any other gatherings that are carefully planned, there is going to be a someone who will rescue the situation, in this case, the mother of Jesus, interestingly unnamed in the gospel of John.

Mishap or not, there are a few important lessons that we can learn in our passage this morning. As I reflect on today’s passage, there is a sense of reality in the situation that Jesus was in. We experience a lot of scarcity in our society that usually takes us to a place where our only hope or what will keep us going is to tug the sleeves of Jesus – just like what his mother did. We are flooded of the mentality that there is not enough. There are not enough resources for everybody, there are not enough safe spaces for people, there are not enough policies to create equity for living things (people, animals, plants and natural resources). In the face of the pandemic, there is not enough caution that we can do to make sure that we are not afflicted by the virus, health or otherwise. And in all of these moments of scarcities, we hope, pray and wait for the miracle. We wait for the water in the jars to become wine, wine that is brimming to the top. We wait for the time when we are no longer anxious because all we need is readily available for all people. When the mother of Jesus brought up this scarcity, there were two provocative but related issues that were brought up in verse 4:

1. The distancing/detaching that Jesus did when he called his mother – ‘woman’
2. And when he said – My hour has not yet come.

Anxiety has become a major part of our lives. There are some cases that there are people around us and situations that we are in which add to our already anxiety-filled lives. But what I am learning from this verse are these – we need to detach ourselves to those that are adding anxiety to our lives. Another point that Jesus brings up is the importance of waiting as an effective response to anxiety. It is unclear if there was a little bit of discussion in-between verses 4-5, but we see that in the end, Jesus did what his mother told him to do. This is my invitation for all of us in these uncertain times. We have to intentionally wait patiently for the hour to come. If you think about it, what comes after is the abundance that followed. Abundance of a great-tasting wine just as what followed in the passage. We are facing a lot of uncertainties but to be anxious is no longer helpful. We need to continue to put our trust to God and wait for the hour that we see the abundance of God's grace. We need to be intentional in waiting. May it be so. Amen.