

# ABUNDANT L♥VE

February 14, 2021

## OPENING PRAYER

O Gracious God, We pray that through this study, we would grow in our understanding of the fullness of your grace. Sometimes the obstacles and disappointments we face in our lives can feel overwhelming, and sometimes our very own failures leave us feeling paralyzed. Give us courage and comfort to overcome, in the knowledge that you long for us to flourish. Empower us with your abundant grace and love to serve others boldly and seek new ways to share your good news. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

### ***The Wedding at Cana – John 2:1-11 (NRSV)***

*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." <sup>6</sup> Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, "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." <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

## INTRODUCTION

The wedding at Cana sets the scene for the beginning of Jesus's ministry in the world (John 2:1-11). This passage is full of symbolic meaning. Jesus acts on behalf of the young couple, but John tells us the act is not just a miracle, but a "sign" of his coming glory. As a guest, Jesus brings new wine to the wedding feast. Later, Jesus will say that he is the bridegroom, who rejoices in his bride, the Church. How can we be a people who live fully in the "sign" and light of Christ's abundant love?

## QUESTIONS

- 1) Mary comes to Jesus and says, "They have no wine." The writer of the gospel uses this piece of information and Mary's relationship with Jesus in order to set up this first "sign" of Jesus's true identity. Mary seems to have an intimate knowledge of what is happening at the wedding, and she calls on Jesus to help. We too are aware of needs around us, and may ask God for help. We may also be the answer to someone's prayer. Can you think of a time that you were able to be the answer to someone's prayer? A time when someone else was an answer to your prayer? Share that experience with the group.
- 2) Jesus says to Mary, "My hour has not yet come." Jesus will talk about "his hour" many times, referring to the hour of his eventual torture and execution. When his mother appeared with her request, Jesus knew this sign would bring him one step closer to his final hour on earth. That fateful hour has come and gone, and Jesus has accomplished what he came to accomplish through his life, death and resurrection. We now live on the other side of that "hour." What does that "hour" mean to you and for your life?
- 3) We learn that six stone water jars were there for "rites of purification," and Jesus had them filled "to the brim." Jesus was announcing that rituals for purification would no longer be needed in order to be in God's presence. Share your understanding of the Temple and required rituals, and how Jesus would change what it meant to be in relationship with God.
- 4) Notice the banquet master says, "you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus provided the superior quality wine, though few would have noticed or complained if the quality had been poor. Nevertheless, Jesus provided the best. As followers of Jesus, we live in the abundance of God's love, grace, and forgiveness. When you receive the cup at communion, what is your understanding of Christ's gift? Share with the group, one way you might live more fully with this understanding of God's grace.
- 5) The Wedding at Cana was the first of many "signs." The last and greatest of these signs was Jesus's resurrection. As we walk the journey of Lent, we look forward and back to the wonder of Easter. Who can you invite on this journey of wonder? What will you say to the person you have in mind?