

Bible reading: **John 2v1-11** (Epiphany 3)

I want to draw your attention to how an ordinary person plays a crucial role that leads God to do an extraordinary miracle; and what that means for us.

2v1 is the first mention of Mary in John's gospel. She is introduced simply as Jesus' mother. Her importance is highlighted by her being mentioned before Jesus in reference to the guest list at a wedding. This is because what happened there flowed from the intervention Mary made.

When Mary badgers Jesus, this led to the servants present being told to get water, drawing it for the Master of Ceremonies to taste and realising the rest of the celebration was awash now with a new supply of excellent wine.

We might struggle to see any relevance to us. In 'normal' times we can pop into a supermarket if we run short, or order a delivery on-line!

However, the same gospel writer records Jesus saying Jesus to his disciples (essentially those who were with him at the same wedding in Cana at the start of his ministry) about 3 years later, in 14v12:

“Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

What the disciples witnessed was part of their induction; for a time when they would do ‘greater things’. Moreover, the company of ‘whoever’ extends to us!

The promise is for us also because, according to Paul in 2 Timothy 3v16-17, the scriptures passed down to us are for us to find ourselves fully equipped to do every good work God calls us to. Our reading of this miracle has more than historical interest but is there to ignite our faith and also be part of our training for ministry.

Very often this may entail delivering a food parcel, perhaps making a phone call to an isolated friend. BUT, sometimes triggering a miracle is all that will suffice!

What was at stake in Cana was the host family’s reputation. We may assume the guests had been well catered for already but there was little greater cultural shame than for them to find the party was over because there was nothing more to be served. God, who knows the detail of our lives intimately, cares about such matters and can use us to disclose his care.

John describes it as a sign, through which Jesus' glory was unveiled. If we want to know more about what God is like, we can be sure his generosity is without limit and there is no shortage of supply.

Here is how Mary was so pivotal to this most memorable of miracles:

- a) **Mary was in no doubt about her relationship with Jesus.** She was his mother and had brought him into this world. Later in John, Jesus gave his disciples a wonderful promise – that he and the Father would be at home in their lives. It is as we push this promise to its natural conclusion, we begin to grasp what Jesus meant when he spoke with Nicodemus about being 'born again' or 'born from above'. We become part of the family.

- b) **Mary used her access to summon Jesus' engagement in another family's problem.** She notices the looming embarrassment, turns to Jesus and says, in effect: 'Do something!' Sometimes our prayers should be just like that.

My question is: do we know who we are and can be in relation to God, through faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord?

It is so much more than being christened CofE, accepting the structures of the local church as a good place to express Christian beliefs, important as these things are.

In his epistles Paul writes of us being adopted by grace through faith; having access to God as Father, Son and HS in heaven whilst living firmly grounded in this world.

We are invited to live knowing God, not just about God; and being able to present the needs of others to God because we have direct and personal access to Him (see Ephesians 2v18). The reason this remains very much the case for us is Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13v8).

A prayer you can use as you need and wish:

“Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for making it possible - through your life, death and resurrection - for me to join heaven’s family. Thank you, my sins and shortcomings need, no longer, keep me at arms-length from knowing and enjoying God. Establish your presence in my life and fill me with your Spirit. I resolve to play my part in all you promised for this season. Let things, through me, be on earth as they are in heaven. Amen.”