



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

on the Branford Green

May you find Christ, Community and Compassion within these historic walls.

Your "Wine State"

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Maybe you have seen the humorous photo making the rounds on Facebook, a reference to today's Gospel story of the wedding at Cana. It was taken in a grocery or liquor store. The sign over the shelf said water but the shelves were stocked with red wine. The caption said, "Jesus was here." I found it very funny.

There's a way studying and entering into scripture that invites people to see themselves in some character in the story. We find what resonates in us as we consider what is going on from the perspective of that character. Who are you in the Garden of Eden, Adam, Eve or the Snake? Who are you in the story of the Prodigal Son; are you the forgiving father who had been insulted and abandoned by his son, are you that wretched, wastrel of a son, or are you the surly older brother? You can look at a story from the inside, taking on the parts of more than one character.

So where do we see ourselves in this story today? Probably none of us are going to say Jesus, that just doesn't feel comfortable. We know that there has to have been a bride and a groom. What was their experience, were they even aware of the "running out of wine" drama. There's Mary, who was a guest at the wedding suddenly drawn into the "running out of wine" drama. Lots of good material there as she forces Jesus' hand although he tries to pretend otherwise. There's the distraught wine steward, whose job might be on the line for having miscalculated at the boss's big event. How many of us can identify with that? There are the servants who were asked to fill up the huge jars meant for bath water. What a crazy thing to do for a wedding, what is the boss thinking? And there were also Jesus' disciples who were new at this gig because we're only in Chapter 2 of John's Gospel so they might not have been prepared for such goings on. They could be anywhere on the spectrum of impressed at his skills to wondering just what they've gotten into. They thought he was a really good teacher with a powerful presence and suddenly, he does this. So who are you in this story?

We're all probably a bit of each character. So I guess the better question might be, who or what would you want to be? I know that I would want to be the water. How wonderful to be identified by Jesus as good material for ministry, not to mention miracles. Truth be told that Jesus probably sees us all as the water, something that can be transformed into something more. In the story today, the water doesn't appear to have had a choice, but we do. Will we let the power of Jesus, the power that existed from before time work its magic on us? And what would happen if we said yes?

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Jesus actually said yes in this story. He knows that he has a very particular mission. But he also know that once he gets started there will be no turning back. It takes his mother to say, "you're ready." This moment at the wedding comes when he is surrounded by those whom he has chosen. They are not just his disciples to learn from him, but take part in what he is doing. His stepping into his power involves them too.

The challenge for them is that they might not really get what they have signed on for. We don't often sign up for something to be changed. Usually we expect to learn a new skill or get a bit of information that will help us. But this is different. Jesus' first miracle is the beginning of a movement, a wave of change and that is scary.

The story of the wedding at Cana is the trailer for Jesus' ministry. His plan, his story is about turning us all into something more. Wine is a transformed substance. It is a metaphor for our Christian journey. That's why wine is a part of our sacraments - it starts out as plain and becomes powerful. It is changed, we are likewise expected to change, to allow ourselves to be changed by the grace and God and by the need of God. God needs us to grow beyond small thinking and old patterns. We are the way that God will save humanity from itself.

The epistle that is paired with this gospel reading is Paul's list of spiritual gifts from 1 Corinthians. Paul was all about our being the body of Christ. All of our spiritual gifts are meant for the building up of the body. None of these particular gifts is meant to bring individual recognition or glory. It's all for the greater good.

I want you all to think, for a moment about how God might change you. What would God have you become? What does your "wine-state" look like?

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