

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
Sermon: "When the wine has run out."

Scripture: John 2:1-11, Isaiah 25:6, 9

Rev. Steve Filyk

January 11, 2026

Opener: Oh, worship the king 313

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Have you ever been at an event  
Where they have run out of wine?  
Probably not.  
We live in a land of plenty.  
Most celebrations have well-stocked caterers.  
Some people have their own little wine cellars at home.

Most of us can enjoy a good bottle of vino  
As often as we want to.  
But even when our glasses are full  
The joy can run dry...

In the time of Jesus  
Wine was both essential and celebratory.  
Without modern-day water-treatment facilities,  
Wine offer a safe consumption of fluids  
While providing extra calories and nutrition.

Wine was necessary for everyday life  
AND it was a part of joyous occasion.  
It was something to be shared at life's biggest moments.

It was such a symbol of joy and blessing.  
that it was woven into visions of God's  
promised redemption of his people.

Today's call to worship spoke of a lavish dinner:  
Where the "Lord Almighty

will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples,  
a banquet of aged wine—  
the best of meats and the finest of wines." (Isaiah 25:6)  
Sorry teetotalers—this is part of our collective future.

But if wine was a symbol of such cherished hopes,  
This is why the trouble  
in today's Bible lesson is so serious.

The crisis, as you have already heard  
Is that the wedding banquet,  
Which seems to have just started,  
[And would be expected to last a week]  
Is somehow already out of wine.

This might be akin to inviting a group  
To your home for a conversation and boardgames  
When all of a sudden the lights go out  
and you there are no candles to be found.

For the wedding guests,  
The lack of wine would be a quick end  
To an otherwise joyful wedding celebration.  
It would also be an embarrassment for the family who planned it,  
And an ominous beginning of a marriage.

But somehow Jesus' mother recognises the problem.  
She shares her concern with Jesus  
and asks for his intervention.  
The passage doesn't reveal what she expects him to do.  
She just sort of drops the problem in his lap.

Thankfully, Jesus takes action.

Jesus asks the servants to fill  
Some nearby jars with water,  
Once they have done that,

he tells them to draw out some liquid  
and bring it to the banquet master  
(the catering manager).

Note that Jesus offers no prayers.  
He doesn't lay hands on the jars.  
All he does is give directions.

When the servants bring what they have drawn  
to the banquet master  
the man is amazed by its contents,  
amazed by what he is tasting.

He is so surprised that he hunts down the groom  
To tell him: "Everyone brings out the choice wine first  
and then the cheaper wine  
after the guests have had too much to drink;  
but you have saved the best till now." [John 2:10]

Jesus' intervention has averted a crisis.  
Those at the celebration are blessed  
With the gift of an exquisite wine  
That will not run out.

Just in case you missed it  
each of those stone jars was said to hold 20-30 gallons.  
And there were six of them.  
Lots of great wine for everyone.  
Note that the Gospel writer calls this a sign, not a miracle.  
It is a signpost,  
something that points beyond itself.  
The big question for us  
Isn't whether that wine was a Pinot Noire or Chianti  
But just who this Jesus is.

What the story is pointing at,

Is that Jesus is fulfilling ancient promises:  
"the Lord Almighty will prepare  
a feast of rich food for all peoples,  
a banquet of aged wine—  
the best of meats and the finest of wines." [Isaiah 25:6]

Despite the praise given to the groom,  
Jesus is the provider of the fine wine.  
He is the host, and he is the true bridegroom,  
The one the people have long been expecting.

In Isaiah's terms Jesus is the one  
Who has come to take away the shame  
Of the barren widow Israel,  
and claim her as his own:  
"For your Maker is your husband—  
the Lord Almighty is his name—  
the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer..."  
[Isaiah 54:5]

The Gospel writer wants us to know  
That God has come among in Jesus,  
to save us from our shame,  
and to restore our joy,  
even as he claims us as his own.

Already we have been told by John that  
"Out of [Jesus'] fullness  
we have all received grace in place of grace...  
Later in the Gospel Jesus himself will proclaim:  
"I have come that they may have life,  
and have it to the full." [John 10:10]

Not everyone recognises this in Jesus.

Just consider that wedding.  
 The servants know what Jesus has done,  
 Jesus' disciples believe in him,  
 But the other partygoers are completely unaware.  
 Unlike that wedding long ago  
 we are unlikely to ever run out of wine.  
 There are always more bottles for purchase at the restaurant.  
 A bottle of Chateau Lafite Rothschild [\$1600 at the liquor store]  
 may be out of your range  
 but you can always grab a bottle  
 of a cheap and cheerful Chilean for under \$10.

We live in land of material abundance  
 And yet despite this abundance  
 many of us experience a deep  
 emotional and spiritual thirst.

While we throw parties with lots of wine,  
 and upgrade the vintage for celebration,  
 most of the time we seem to have problems  
 Sustaining our joy.

I wonder if our lack of joy  
 Comes from the fact that we seek it  
 In the wrong things.

Martin Luther once defined God  
 as that from which we "expect all good  
 and to which we are to take refuge in all distress."

[Not So Secular Sweden. (2026, January 8). Retrieved January 9, 2026, from Comment Magazine website: <https://comment.org/not-so-secular-sweden>]

Could it be that part of our modern problem  
 Is that we think we will find deeper satisfaction  
 In having more and having better?

Could it be that rather than having more wine  
 Or better wine

That true fulfillment will come  
 In a deeper relationship with the host?

Let's pray.

Lord you have blessed us with so much,  
 And yet we forget you, we overlook you.  
 Instead of seeing our fulfillment in knowing you,  
 We place our hopes in your gifts.  
 Help us not to miss out on the greatest gift  
 That is available in this life...  
 Not the accumulation of wealth or possessions  
 Or the amassing of honors or achievements,  
 But the spectacular privilege of knowing your  
 Son Jesus Christ and experiencing his presence.  
 Take away the fears that keep us from enjoying his presence.  
 May we discover Jesus to be the great fulfillment  
 Of our hearts desires.  
 We ask this in his holy and powerful name. Amen.