

*You will see greater things than these... (John 1:50b)*

We have a saying in our culture, that we “save the best for last.” Think fireworks shows with their “grand finale,” or award ceremonies, when they make you sit through three hours of awards that most people don’t care about until you get to what everyone’s been waiting for. Of course, it’s also what we all do with our meals – well, sometimes...

Saving the best for last wasn’t the preferred strategy at weddings in the first century. This month, we’re going to hear about Jesus’ “first sign” at a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Usually, hosts would impress the people with the best wine early on. If you serve the best wine first, people will enjoy the taste. It’s only when they’re inebriated that you can slip in the cheap stuff. No one would notice. The hosts there ran out of wine, and somehow Jesus’ mother finds out. She comes to Jesus implying that he do something, even directing the attendants to ‘do what he says.’ But Jesus said, *Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come* (John 2:4). You probably know the rest. Jesus tells the attendants to fill water jugs, then draw some out and take it to the master of the feast. When he tastes the water become wine, he can’t help but to exclaim, *You have kept the good wine until now!* (John 2:10). Jesus saved the best for last.

Now, you probably know that this story isn’t about wine. Really, it’s not even about Jesus turning water into wine. Already in chapter one, Jesus told Nathaniel, *You will see greater things than these* (John 1:50). When John writes of Jesus’ first sign at Cana, it wasn’t just the first in a line of signs and wonders to wow and amaze people into belief. Jesus did many signs, but they still did not believe (John 12:37). These signs were to manifest his glory (1:11). But here’s the rub. The glory manifested isn’t really about the signs at all. Something greater was coming – a greater hour, a greater sign, a greater glory. This time, in the city of God, after Jesus entered triumphantly, he could say, *The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified* (John 12:23). The best for last. This is what the sign of the water become wine pointed to. This is what Jesus was heading towards all along – His passion, arrest, beating, crowning – Jesus was raised up and glorified on the cross. The glory of Christ is in the cross, for it’s there that Jesus does what he has come to do – to give himself for our sins as the Lamb of God. But on Sunday morning, on the third day, Jesus’ glory shines brightly in the resurrection from the dead!

We may thank God for the physical signs of his love to us in our lives. We may marvel even more at the signs he has provided for us in his Word and Sacraments, where he marks us as his own, forgives our sins, and feeds us with the Body and Blood of Jesus. And truly, we should! But, even these point forward to something greater. Jesus is saving the best for last. When Jesus returns, he will raise us up and bring us to a place with no more sickness or crying or pain (Revelation 21:4). There, we will celebrate his wedding feast in his kingdom which will have no end. The signs Christ gives to us manifest his glory. But, he is saving the best for last. And oh, what a glorious day it will be!

-Pastor Squire

“Come, friends, and share the feast; here drink the wine supplied by Him who is both guest and host – for us, the crucified.” (“Come, Join in Cana’s Feast” *LSB 408*, v. 4)