**Cana Grace and Our Response**

John 2:1-11

This story represents the first public manifestation of Jesus' divine power and glory. Picture a beautiful wedding celebration, filled with laughter, dancing, and plenty of food and drink. In those days, weddings were a big deal, and hospitality was everything. But imagine the wine running out—a significant disaster.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, notices the crisis and nudges Jesus, saying, “They have no wine.” What does Jesus say? “Woman, what does that have to do with me? My time hasn’t come yet” (John 2:4). Even Jesus, the Son of God, has moments of reluctance.

But here’s the key: Mary doesn’t give up. Trusting in Him, she tells the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Just like that, Jesus steps in and acts. A mother’s nudge changes everything. It’s as if she’s saying, “Come on, Jesus, you can do this!” And He does. He turns water into wine, and not just any wine, but the finest wine.

Now, let’s consider the six stone jars at the wedding. These jars were used for Jewish purification rituals, an essential aspect of Jewish life. Before meals or after certain activities, they would wash their hands in a special way—not just for hygiene, but to be spiritually clean before God.

The jars were made of stone because stone was considered pure, unlike clay. The number six is also significant, representing imperfection and incompleteness. In Jewish tradition, seven was seen as the perfect number (e.g., seven days of Passover, the Sabbath on the seventh day, the Israelites marching around Jericho for seven days, and Jubilee occurring after seven cycles of seven years). When Jesus turned water into wine, it wasn’t just a simple miracle. It signified that Jesus was bringing something more complete, joyful, and abundant than the old rituals could provide. The wine He created symbolizes joy and blessings, pointing to the new grace and joy Jesus brings into our lives.

Jesus didn’t just fill a couple of cups; He filled large jars, each holding about twenty to thirty gallons. That’s enough wine to keep a celebration going for a week! This act demonstrates God’s amazing generosity. Jesus didn’t merely meet the need; He went above and beyond. David Steele, a Christian author and speaker, refers to this as “Cana Grace,” describing abundant, overflowing grace. This grace isn’t just about meeting needs—it’s about offering an abundance of love, joy, and celebration, much like a grand, joyful party.

While the story of Cana showcases God’s abundant grace, it also raises questions about divine timing and reluctance. How do we reconcile moments when God seems slow to act in our lives?

In our world today, we might wonder, “Where is this divine abundance?” We see so much suffering, poverty, and heartache. Why does God sometimes seem reluctant to act in times of need? Jesus’ initial reluctance can be puzzling. God’s timing might not align with our desires, and that can be frustrating.

James McBride Dabbs, a 20th-century American sociologist and writer, noted that religion often feels disconnected from life, highlighting a gap between religious practices and everyday realities. Do we recognize the grace of Cana in our daily lives and within our faith communities? Someone once said, “God gives us a bicycle to ride, but some people still carry the bicycle instead of riding it.” We have been given an abundance of grace, meant to overflow into our lives, yet we often feel empty and burdened. How can we fully embrace this overflowing grace? How can we respond to God’s abundant grace, so our community experiences light, hope, and new life?

Like Mary, we must persist. We must keep nudging and trusting that God’s abundance is on the way. Perhaps divine reluctance is a call for us to engage, to be part of the solution, and to seek God’s generosity in our own lives. Just as Mary nudged Jesus to respond to the need for wine, we are called to be persistent in serving others and encouraging God’s action in the face of injustice and suffering. We can be mediators and intercessors, bringing God into situations, trusting that He will work through us to bring justice and compassion to the world.

Practical Application

1. Identify Needs by Observing and Listening: Take time to connect with members of your community. Ask questions and pay attention to what might go unsaid.

2. Celebrate Together: Organize community meals, spiritual formation groups, Bible study sessions, choirs, potlucks, educational workshops, or awareness campaigns. These activities can help foster a sense of togetherness and joy.

3. Persist in Prayer and Take Action: Engage in volunteer work, fundraising, or raising awareness about local issues. Partner with local organizations and initiatives such as UMCOR (disaster relief missions in Global Ministries).

Let us celebrate new beginnings in our lives and those around us, knowing that God is at work—transforming not just water into wine but also our lives and communities into places of joy, hope, and abundance. Together, we can advocate for a brighter future, embodying the generosity and love that God has shown us. Amen!