

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time - John 2: 1 – 11

There is more than one way to answer a question. There is more than one perspective through which we can view life. A young psychologist was given the task of administering a new psychological test that was meant to show mental flexibility of elderly people.

His first patient was a 91-year-old man. When the man came in, the psychologist carefully explained that this would be a verbal test and that some of the questions were very easy where others were rather difficult.

He asked the man whether he was ready to begin. “Let’s go,” the elderly gentleman said. “Ok,” said the psychologist, “this is the first question. Can you name two days of the week that begin with ‘T’? “That’s easy,” said the man, “today and tomorrow.”

The psychologist paused for a few moments, wrote a few notes, shuffled his papers, and said, “Well let’s go on to the second question. Now this one is much more difficult, can you tell me how many seconds there are in a year?”

Without batting an eye, the man responded, Twelve. “Twelve!” said the psychologist. “Yes,” said the elderly man with confidence, “the 2nd of January, the 2nd of February, the 2nd of March and so on.”

You see, there is more than one way to answer a question and there is more than one perspective through which we can live life.

This is an important insight because it means that since there is more than one way, we must choose which answer will be our answer and which perspective we will adopt.

Now in today’s Gospel Jesus gives us a perspective through which we can view life—a very optimistic one. The gospel of course is the story of the wedding feast at Cana and the key line is the one uttered by the chief steward, “You have kept the best wine until now.”

The good wine was not served first; the good wine was served last. The pattern of this gospel therefore tells us that we are moving forward, that things are getting better.

This gospel reminds us that we as Christians believe in an optimistic view of the world. That because of Jesus' death and resurrection we don't feel that we are falling backwards but that we are moving forward.

We are moving forward to what is the best possible thing: the establishment of the kingdom of God. We believe that God is leading us not to something inferior but to something wonderful, that the best wine is not behind us but before us.

Jesus presents this optimistic message to us today. The question is do we believe it. Can we buy into such a positive view, or will we insist on a more pessimistic approach?

In this light I would like to suggest to you two questions for you to reflect upon this week. The first question is this – Do you believe that the world is moving forward or backward? Do you believe that human civilization is becoming better or worse?

There are different ways to answer that question. Certainly if you center in on some of the horrors of recent times such as the Holocaust, Hiroshima, or genocide in Africa, a pessimistic answer seems appropriate. But is that pessimism the only perspective which is possible?

The second question which I would like you to consider this week: Is my life-getting better or worse? Do I see myself moving forward or backward?

Again there are many ways to answer that question. If you happen to be in the midst of some terrible tragedy or loss then your life can certainly seem to be falling apart.

Yet there can be another way to answer the question. For example, many of us deal with the diminishment which comes from age as we move to our 40's to our 60's to our 80's.

We have less energy, less health, our friends die. How are we to interpret that movement? Is the only viewpoint that we are caught in a downward spiral?

Must we believe that with each day there is less and less of life? Not necessarily. It's possible to recognize that even as life diminishes in all these ways, other things are increasing.

Moreover, the things which are increasing might be more important things—experience, wisdom, patience, generosity, and thankfulness. If we find that those gifts are increasing, then—even as other gifts diminish—we can claim that the best wine is now.

So those are the two questions which I would like you to reflect on this week. Is the world at large and is my personal life-becoming better or worse, moving forward or falling backward?

Jesus tells us that the best things are in the future, the best wine has not yet to be drunk. We have to choose whether to believe Him.

I suggest that we make that choice carefully. Because the choice we make will shape our world. It will determine whether we think that we are moving forward into darkness or into light, whether we are moving forward to death or to life.

As the steward said, “You have kept the best wine until now.” AMEN.