**Unexpected Jesus Series-Wedding at Cana**

**Sunday November 1, 2026**

First thing I want to tell you is how much I relate to the relationship between Mary and Jesus as told in this little story from John's gospel. I mean, most of you have met my son, Colin, but for those of you who haven't, let me tell you that he would make a perfect stand in for Jesus in this miracle—not that he can turn water into wine—he's never done that—but he has been known to give a look of disgust (say if I ask him to take out the trash or do the dishes or clean the house before his sister's come for the weekend to celebrate his Grandma's birthday) followed by a "Mother, that is not my problem" with the best of them. The "mother" in lieu of what Jesus called Mary that some translate as "honoured woman" but is apparently more like "ma'am" in our daily speech. I've always read this passage as a bit of teen-age snark to which, if I was Mary, would garner the response "That's "mum" to you." Before I'd turn to the others and instruct them to "just do what he says" because trust me, he's gonna do what I tell him to do. Mothers and sons, am I right?

And maybe you're wondering if that is what is unexpected about Jesus this Sunday, that he actually does do what his mother asks of him. Cause, mothers and sons, am I right? I've watched a lot of dishes grow mold waiting for Colin to get around to washing them (sorry buddy, if you don't want shade from the pulpit, you know what you've gotta do).

But, in all seriousness, I think it is pretty amazing that Mary is given this kind of influence over Jesus in John's gospel. This is Jesus' first miracle according to John, so it's pretty important. It's meant to reveal something essential about who Jesus is and what he's all about.

So, if Mary is asking him to do this (or forcing his hand as the case may be), then we should look at what she says about Jesus and what he is going to do and the best place to find that is in her Magnificat that she sings in Luke's Gospel. A song about how, through Jesus, God will pull the might down from their thrones and raise up the lowly and fill the hungry with good things (or good wine?). But it's a message about a new kingdom of God where all will have enough—and if you look at this story—it is indeed one about unexpected abundance.

I mean, most scholars agree that those jars of water used for purification rituals would amount to 180 gallons—that's about 681 litres for us metric people in the crowd—so that's gonna be more than enough for even the most well attended wedding—especially since they'd already had quite a bit of wine—enough to run out—and it doesn't say anywhere that there were bad wedding planners involved so I'm going to assume there should have been enough already… and now Jesus makes this absolutely ridiculous over-abundance of delicious new wine. It's quite the kick-off to his ministry—one whose central message will indeed be one of abundance—the absolute unending abundance of God's love and God's grace.

I would argue that we're not that great at really understanding this miracle of abundance. That there might be a way to have more than enough for everyone in this world. It's a lot easier to believe in what Walter Brueggeman called the "myth" of scarcity. I mean, we live on this earth and we need to start really taking seriously that there is a limit to the resources we're plundering right? We need more people and more companies to live with a little (or a lot) less.

But, Sarah Bessey argues, the down side of “being driven by the fear of Not Enough and Never Enough is that we make our decisions out of fear and anxiety that there isn’t enough for us. These core beliefs can lead us to the treacheries of war and hunger, injustice and inequality. It’s the origin for the belief that we must keep others down so we can stay on top. We stockpile money and food and comforts at the expense of one another and our own souls.”

What does it look like if we can turn this scarcity model on it’s head and really believe that Jesus came so that people could have life and have it more abundantly (Jn 10:10)?

Maybe it looks like a bunch of food bank directors and volunteers gathered around tables on a Wednesday afternoon trying to figure out how we can share the abundance of food that will be donated when Costco opens in Wasaga Beach—a skid a day onto tables instead of into landfills!

Maybe it looks like a people with and in support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank going to Parliament Hill to speak with MPs about the ways that organization is creating world food security in all of its programing and to encourage the government to keep its commitments (Rachel Buchner “Hunger on the Hill 2026 https://substack.com/home/post/p-221964809).

Or maybe more than 100 gathered for a WOWRC meeting pledging to become an apartheid free community in response to what is happening in the Middle East.

It looks like small United Church congregations across Canada gathering around a communion table for a feast – trusting that these small groups of committed people really have an abundance of love and strength—enough to change the world!

To trust in the abundance of love and grace God has for us is to live lives of abundance. And frankly, it’s a bit of a miracle in and of itself.

And maybe some of us are thinking that it’s a bit too much of an ask. We’re not the ones who can change water into wine after all—that was our man, Jesus.

To you, I say, here’s my favourite and most unexpected thing about this little story from John about a wedding gone wrong, it was just a wedding—an everyday, average wedding. Like, some biblical scholars like to point out that running out of wine would bring shame on the family and it would have been a super big deal in the world Jesus was living in but, let’s get real—it wasn’t a life and death situation here. It was just an ordinary wedding. (as an aside, I realize the wedding industry has gone a bit nuts and these days there seems to be a number of people who believe the perfection of every wedding detail is life and death stuff and that there is no “ordinary” in wedding—but I like to remind the couples I marry—that at the end of the day, as long as they are still in love and the wedding license is filled out and submitted then it was a success!)

My point is, Jesus’ first miracle—the one that sets the tone and tells us everything we need to know about what his ministry is about—is in the midst of everyday, ordinary life. In the midst of a raucous party no less! As the Women’s Bible Commentary writes, “This opening to Jesus’ ministry shows that the miraculous life-giving power of God is at work even (and perhaps, especially) in the intimate daily places of human lives.” And isn’t that the real good news—the gospel of this story? Our God is a God who shows up in our messy, ordinary, everyday lives with unexpected abundance. Our God shows up when we are thirsty and offers us the cup of blessing. Thanks be to God!