*Jars Filled With Water*

John 2:1-11

Our Gospel lesson for this morning deals with Jesus’ first miracle, the wedding at Cana where he turns the water into wine. This miracle represents an enactment of what he has to offer, and is the first indication that his disciples or followers came to belief of sorts. To be noted is that Jesus will not be governed by his mother or anyone else. This miracle is also noted as an extravagant miracle, a miracle of abundance. Jesus turns an abundance of water into wine, not just any wine but a “best” wine. The amount of wine shows the true abundance of the gifts available through Jesus. Jesus has other “abundant” miracles that he does recorded in the Gospels, i.e. the feeding of the 5,000.. These kinds of miracles anticipate Jesus’ glory and the abundance of goodness he offers. (Read John 2:1-11)

We often hear about the life of abundance available through belief in Jesus. The word abundance gets twisted into all kinds of meanings. Joe and I met with a friend in his office one day. He claimed that it was the right of Christians to be wealthy and well off. As he flashed his bling and showed us the possibilities if one invested in the right investments, God would provide the abundance of riches and peace of mind. For some reason we didn’t connect with his words and his ways and walked out of his office shaking our heads. Sure, he had the right to believe that wealth was a by product of his faith, but we questioned the nature of that abundance and the set of baggage that came along with it. Certainly the winners of the big lottery now face headaches they never had before.

Just as difficult to get a handle on is the belief that faith brings an abundance of joy and happiness. Faith does bring joy but it does not eliminate the struggles of daily life, the heartaches of loss and the bumps in the road we all face periodically. Jesus did meet the physical needs of people, including the “need” for wine at a wedding party. In other miracles he offered the abundance of fish, bread, sight, hearing, life, and calmness. He gave of his abilities abundantly, but usually for a purpose.

Jesus’ miracles always pointed to something bigger, something far greater than meeting others’ physical needs. Jesus offers a spiritual abundance that outlasts any physical needs. People will get hungry and thirsty again, people will be healed and fall ill again, people will come back to life only to die again. Miracles are temporary and lead many to see the abundant God who performed miracles through Jesus. But the spiritual abundance is something that is sustainable, in fact is eternal. And it is that abundance that is all around us. I would like to show you a video that Mark VanDyke shared on the internet. It shows an example of the kinds of abundance that is available through faith. (Show video)

What was there an abundance of in that video? Someone found a way to show Jesus in all books of the Bible, Old and New Testaments. Someone coached that little boy into being able to recite those words effectively using his gifts to orate that message. All of it in some way was inspired by God clear down to Deb finding and looking at and being inspired enough by the video to show me. And perhaps some of us here have been inspired by the video in some way that changed our thinking about faith.

The Christian faith has inspired an abundance of stories, sayings, written prayers, writings, songs that draw people to it and strengthen our sense of God. There is an abundance of literature in libraries and bookstores that talk about and help grow faith. There are an abundance of opportunities to be drawn closer to God in the natural world, from the tiniest organisms to the farthest reaches of space. There are an abundance of ways that one can experience the peace of God even if just for a moment. There are an abundance of people who gather to support and fellowship and give of themselves so that others may find God as well. There are an abundance of churches and other places to worship and certainly an abundance of like- minded people who reach out to the rest of the world in service and mission around the world.

There is a whole lot more to our faith than we can even imagine. God’s abundant love shines through an often very dark world. God’s abundant love is available especially through Jesus. There is almost no escaping it. We have an abundance of ways we can experience peace, love, joy, and a sense of the eternal. Even in our worst moments, the abundance of God is still available.

So we didn’t win the lottery! We are rich in life itself. Try telling that to a person in dire straits! What we do have is something we can truly count on in times of trouble. We have God’s strength to rely on. We have God’s comfort to rely on. We have God’s love to help us catch perspective on any problem we face. And we have God’s presence 24/7. We have access to God at all times and in all places. And that kind of wealth never ends! And it is God’s presence and only God’s presence that can bring ultimate satisfaction and the greatest sense of peace we can experience. When all else dims our sense of well being, there is always God to rely on. That is the abundance that miracles of abundance point to. We are designed to be spiritual beings, walking with God in daily life. Little else really matters. Jesus holds the keys to it all. Jesus knows God and draws us to Him. Let us jump into the very Breath of Life and partake of its goodness.