

St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Tallebudgera QLD

19th January 2025 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

John 2:1-11

BLESSINGS FLOW

There are a lot of questions which many of us most likely have about God, about His relationship with us, about how He works in the world and our lives. These questions might include things like, ‘how does God work in our lives?’, ‘Is anything too small or unimportant for us to pray for?’, ‘how does God answer our prayers’, ‘why don’t we see God at work around us more often?’. Even if you don’t find yourself outwardly sometimes asking these kinds of questions, think about whether your beliefs and practices around things like prayer have changed since you were younger, eg, did you used to pray for things like a sick pet, or to find something you had lost which was special to you, but then, as you’ve got older have you come to think that as important as those things might be to me, looking at what God has to deal with each day they’re not really worth bothering Him with?

A movie which deals with prayers being offered and answered, and many other aspects of Christian life, really well is *Bruce Almighty*. It’s about a weather reporter, called Bruce (Jim Carrey), who complains so much about what God is and isn’t doing that one day God himself (Morgan Freeman), comes down and says, ‘ok, you do it better, you be me’. One of the things Bruce, as God, now has to deal with is all the prayers he has to hear and answer continually. Finally, he gets them all sent to him in email form, but they are too many for him to answer. So, he simply replies, ‘yes to all’. Following scenes show riots because 8,000 people win the lottery so they receive 20c each, a woman tells how she lost a lot of weight on the Crispy Crème diet, and other results of the outrageous answers to some prayers. Those kinds of examples again bring before us the questions; is anything too small and unimportant, or outrageous, for us to pray for? And also, how does God answer our prayers, and give us His blessings, especially when we don’t actually notice it happening?

The answers to these kinds of questions we may have about God, our relationship with Him, and how He works in our lives, are actually in the Bible even though we don’t always see them, or perhaps want to see them. This reading we have here today from John 2 is one instance of God, through Jesus, is teaching us about these things. It is an interesting account in a number of ways. John only includes seven miracles in His Gospel, so why does He include this one,

and why is it first? What is at stake here is a bridegroom being embarrassed because the wine runs out at his week-long wedding; no one is sick, no one has died, no one is hungry. And yet, seemingly, John puts this in the top seven of all Jesus' miracles. It's also interesting because Jesus doesn't do or say anything here to make people notice His amazing power; He simply says, 'fill up the water jars'. And when the transformation of the water into very fine wine came, there was no flash or bang, in fact, most people there didn't even notice. I can imagine some of the guests, after a few days drinking, saying to each other when this new wine came out, 'I tell you what, I must've drunk more than I ever have before, because this is best wine I've ever tasted!' In their wine-induced haze they had no idea they were drinking the fruits of Jesus' first miracle! Compared to other miracles we know of, including the others John recounts, there is no loud voice or great act by Jesus, no spectacular act like walking on water or Lazarus walking out of the tomb still wrapped in burial clothes. In this miracle the blessings flow in a very small, ordinary, quiet way.

So, why did Jesus perform His first miracle in such a quiet and inconsequential way, and why did John chose to include it in the relatively short list of miracles in his account of Jesus' life? There are many reasons for this, but one is that there are many things we can learn from this miracle about how God works in our lives. I want to look at just two of these for now: the first of these is that God cares about the small things of our lives; if it matters to us it matters to Him. And the second is that God's blessings flow and His care is given, and our prayers are answered, in the big and the spectacular, but also in the small and the unseen, the everyday. Let's have a look at those two themes.

One of the questions I raised at the beginning was, 'is anything too small for us to pray about?' As children perhaps we did pray for a lost pet, something we really wanted, or other seemingly small things which might not have seemed so big to others but were to us. As adults we see a much bigger picture of both what is going on around us and the world as a whole, so we might see a health issue we are going through as being nowhere near as serious as that of someone else we know, lost car keys as being insignificant compared to those who live in their car, and whatever relationship strains we have as being nothing compared to the wars and conflicts going on around the world. So, we might think, while something may be important to us, perhaps it's not big enough to bother God about.

Remember that in this miracle account, no one is sick or dying, or going hungry, or threatened by a storm. The wine has run out at a wedding feast, so what is at stake is the reputation of the bridegroom, who may forever after be known as 'Reuben the wineless'. But still, Jesus cares, and acts, and does so in a way that there is no embarrassment because most people don't even know the miracle has occurred. What a great picture for God's care, for how the blessings flow, for us in our lives. If it matters to us, it matters to God. It's not about ourselves compared to others, our situation compared to theirs, degrees of what is 'prayer-worthy' and what isn't. If it matters to us, it matters to God. And remember that unlike Bruce in the movie, God is able to both hear, and consider, and answer our prayers in the way which is best for us. We can bring the big things to God, and we can also bring Him the small things which perhaps no one else even knows about. In the same way that we want to know about and help our loved ones with even the smallest things in their lives, God wants us to bring to Him the things which might seem small to us as well. In turning to Him, His blessings can flow in and through these things also. We can *allow* God to be awesome in the awe-dinary.

And then, in knowing that we can even bring what we feel are the smallest things to God, God's blessings flow and His care is given, and our prayers are answered, in the big and the spectacular, but also in the small and the unseen, the everyday. We can *see* God being awesome in the awe-dinary. Spectacular miracles still do happen today, for us and others, no doubt about that, and you may well have a story about how God answered prayer in a way which is otherwise unexplainable. Thank God He does do that. But God also answers prayers and gives us His blessings in ways which, like the new and best wine at this feast, can easily go unnoticed, because we say 'it's lucky it rained when it did', 'how about that person coming along at just that time, and they were a doctor; what are the odds!', 'that worked out well that we had just enough money to get by at that time', 'my relationship with that person just seemed to get better over time'. Sometimes even when we have prayed about these things, the answers to those prayers can be so every day, so ordinary, even so unexpected because the answer may not have been what we were actually praying for, that we don't see those events or happenings of 'luck', 'coincidence', or even 'nature' as being as God's blessings flowing to us.

God does work in the big and spectacular ways, many miracles of Jesus show us that, but also in the small and unseen, the everyday, and we see that in Jesus' first miracle here. And that can happen in a variety of ways. One of them is that in praying our attitude is changing: if we pray to find lost car keys, the calmness we may find in bringing that prayer to God can

help us to search for the keys in a more systematic and less frantic manner, leading to the lost being found. In praying about our financial situation, the strength we get from that prayer, and by acknowledging that all we have comes from God and He provides us with all we need, can help our attitude to adjust what we believe is important and necessary, and to be more content and at ease with what we do have. In praying about a relationship, rather than focusing on ‘Make that person change the way I want them to!’, but instead to bring a prayer asking for strength to be self-reflective, accepting, adaptive, forgiving, and to see our own faults, God again can and does answers those prayers in ways that may not be big and spectacular, but we may find the blessings in the changes we see in that relationship; changes that we might not even recognise as answers to our prayer. Take the time, make the effort, to see all the blessings of God which flow to you in your life, especially those which are easy to overlook.

In little things, God’s blessings flow. There is no need, no worry, no concern, which is too small for us to bring to God. And we can also be open to seeing God’s blessings for us in both the big and spectacular ways, as well as in the small and every day. God help us to turn to Him in all things, and to see, appreciate, and give Him glory for the many blessings which flow to us from Him each day. Amen.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION/REFLECTION

- What are some of the questions you have about God, life, the world? How might you be able to get answers for these (or at least some opinions)?
- How do you feel about bringing even the small things in your life to God? Is there any situation you haven’t/don’t pray about because you don’t consider it important enough to bother Him with? Know that if it’s important to you it’s important to God, and bring these things to Him.
- Do you always see the answers to your prayers, or do you sometimes miss them; perhaps God answers in ways you didn’t expect? Think back to find the times God did answer your prayer but you didn’t see that at the time.
- Do you see God’s blessings which flow to you, or do you sometimes write them off as being a coincidence, nature at work, or luck? Take the time to stop and see all the blessings which flow from God to you in your life, especially those easily overlooked and taken for granted.

Pray: Bring to God any worries or concerns you have right now, including those you might feel are too small to bother Him with. Thank God for the blessings He gives you in both the big and spectacular but also the small and everyday things in your life.

Pastor Andrew R. Koehler

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