

**2019-01-20 ... 10am Service ... Revd Rob Wear**

**(Pulpit swap during Week of Christian Unity)**

**Isaiah 62: 1 – 5; 1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 11; John 2: 1 – 11**

Anyone been to a wedding? How well planned – or otherwise – was it?

In Jesus' time the wedding was a huge community event – the party might go on for days and it was up to the bridegroom to make sure that there was plenty of wine etc.

This one, however, hasn't got enough. This could have been embarrassing at best ... Jesus and his family and friends are there, and Jesus' mother turns to him ... Why? Jesus response to her is to effectively say: *this isn't my responsibility* – and yet he takes it on, and quietly, behind the scenes, not for his own glory, performs a miracle.

And not only is a huge quantity of wine produced, but it's of such a high quality that the chief steward compliments the presumably somewhat bemused bridegroom – who has received, unknowing, even unlooked for, an astonishing and extravagant gift.

This story of Jesus turning water into wine is in so many ways a foreshadowing of what's to come – Jesus acting to benefit others, taking the place of someone who arguably has failed in their duty, setting things right. Here in this story we begin to see, through Jesus' actions, the Grace of God. As we move onwards, through to Easter, we will learn much more of God's grace.

It matters to us because it's the promise on which our whole faith depends: that even though by ourselves we don't merit a place in God's Kingdom, God has shown us grace through Christ and stands ready to welcome us. If the gift to the bridegroom was extravagant – how much more extravagant is the gift of eternal life to us and all who call Christ our Lord?

And yet how easily we can fall into the human trap of thinking that somehow we deserve all this, and that we can count how blessed we are by keeping score!

This is exactly what Paul is trying to tell the Corinthians – they were trying to say some gifts, some roles were more important – the subtext being that the ones getting them were more worthy. Paul takes them to task ...

**We receive grace through Christ, and it comes with no strings attached.**

But because we have received this extravagant gift of God, and because this is like a fountain that will never run dry, we also know that there is more than enough to share.

**So how do we share this Good News of God's Grace with those around us?**