

Bethany – Jan. 17, 2010 – Epiphany 2

John 2:1-11

SOMETIMES IT TAKES A GOOD KICK!

There's an old story about a very skeptical man who seemed to get a lot of pleasure and delight from harassing the local clergy. He loved to make his minister look inadequate and just a bit below the accepted intellectual standard. His minister usually took those challenges to his theology with restraint and grace even though he sometimes had to bite his tongue to do so.

One day this old skeptic was heckling the minister about his views on miracles. "Give me just one concrete example of a miracle," he taunted. "Come on, Reverend, just one example." And that was when the minister kicked him in the shin bone as hard as he could. The skeptic couldn't believe what had happened, and when the pain subsided enough for him to talk he asked, "What did you do that for?"

"Did that hurt?" asked the minister.

"Yes, it sure did," the man replied as he rubbed his sore leg.

And the minister meekly answered, "I thought so. If it hadn't hurt it would have been a miracle!"

I'm not sure that was the best way to explain a miracle, but there have been times when I've been tempted to try. Today for our first worship service together we are taking a look at the very first miracle performed by Jesus according to John's gospel.

Here's how John relates it:

One day there was a wedding in Cana and after the wedding there was a reception. A big party. Jesus and some of his disciples had been invited. His mother had also been invited. And

like sometimes happens at any good party they ran out of wine. And you know the story. You heard it read just a few minutes ago. Mary came looking for Jesus and told him, "They have no wine." Sounds like she was really thirsty and she expected him to do something.

Jesus was kind of harsh with her. He asked, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come." But still, it seems that he cared about the people who were there and he wanted to help them. So, he found six stone jars each of which was filled with 20-30 gallons of water, and he turned the water into wine. That's a lot of wine. Between 120 and 180 gallons of wine. Three 55 gallon barrels. Somewhere between 600 and 1,000 bottles of wine. Get the picture? A lot of wine!

One Sunday School teacher asked her class, "What do we learn from this miracle?" And one young fellow replied, "If you're going to have a party make sure you invite Jesus."

But really, folks, what meaning does this story have for us here at Bethany United Church as we begin the second decade of 2010? What do you think it means? Well, I'll tell you what it says to me and you can decide what it says to you.

What it says to me is this: God through Christ can take something as ordinary as clear, cold water and make it into something that is new and beautiful. And I believe that God does that every single day. God takes the ordinary events of our lives and redeems them. God touches our human, sinful lives and transforms them into something new.

This God that we serve shows up in the strangest places because God wants to be where we are. And God takes whatever we are and whoever we are and changes us into something wonderful and special. God takes the ordinariness of our lives

and changes it into the most delicious wine. Sometimes it takes a good kick to make us recognize a miracle when we see one. It's enough to drive a person to drink good wine! Thanks be to God. Amen.