

Commit It and Forget It

2nd Sun. after Epiphany – 01/19/25 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: John 2:1-11 Pastor Keith Besel

vv. 3-5, “³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ ⁴ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ ⁵ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever He tells you.’”

Introduction

✘ Ron Popeil is a famous American inventor in the 1950s to 1980s who became a familiar face in the early days of late night infomercials on TV. He and his company, *Ronco*, produced things like the *Pocket Fisherman*, *Mr. Microphone*, the *Chop-O-Matic* hand food processor, the *Veg-O-Matic*, the *Beef Jerky Machine*, and his *Electric Pasta Maker*. But one of his best inventions was his rotisserie oven which came with his famous infomercial slogan “Set it and forget it!” You put the food in. You set the oven. You walk away. No muss. No fuss. “Set it and forget it.”

➔ The popular Christian cartoons, a favorite of many of you here in this room, *Veggie Tales* even had a fun episode that spoofed *Ronco*’s products where the talking vegetables were trying to sell a “marvelous product” called the “Forgive-O-Matic”. “The new Ronco Forgive-O-Matic slices, dices and purees your sins away,” says the advertisement. All you have to do is dial up your sin, “push this button, and bingo, God forgives you of your sins. ... All for one low price of just \$19.95. ... So don’t delay, order today.” When a young boy-of-a-vegetable challenges the claim, the advertiser says, “You can’t be forgiven without a Forgive-O-Matic.”

✘ In our Gospel Reading today, it kind of sounds like Mary is promoting her Son, Jesus, as a sort of Forgive-O-Matic spiritual utensil, doesn’t it? The major difference though is that Jesus is not some money-making, low-budget invention. He is the real deal, but at this point nobody knows who He is or what He has come to earth to do for the lost and sinful souls of this world.

➔ So, Mary comes to Jesus at a wedding celebration with a social conundrum and asks for help. Although His reply sounds rather harsh, Mary is not dismayed. Mary has full confidence in Jesus. She knows that He alone is able to take care of the situation, not because she asks Him, but because He is truly gracious. In fact, Mary knew that the situation was saved as soon as she committed it to Jesus.

➔ She knew, my dear Christians, that when you and I commit all of our troubles to Jesus, He will take care of them without fail. In a very real sense, therefore, we can spiritually “commit it and forget it.”

I. Mary is confident Jesus has the situation in hand.

✘ The situation before Jesus was pretty simple. He was at a wedding, and they ran out of wine. Because this was only the third day in a traditional seven-day celebration, this would have been a very embarrassing, even humiliating situation for the families of the happy couple.

➔ Leon Morris, in his commentary, points out that the stigma from this situation in that first-century culture would be long-lasting and could even result in a lawsuit. So the problem had to be dealt with.

✘ Apparently Mary knew the family. She came to Jesus with the problem and told Him, “They have no wine” (v. 3).

➔ What did Mary expect Jesus to do? Did she want Him to send His disciples out to buy more wine? Was she just telling Him because she felt bad for the couple? Was she trying to exercise her parental authority and control over Jesus?

- John tells us in verse 11 that this was Jesus' first "sign." It's not like Jesus was known at this point as someone who did miracles growing up. In Luke, chapter two, we're told that Jesus grew up like any other child and was obedient to His parents. And when Jesus went to Nazareth in Mark, chapter six, the people were astonished that He had received the power to do miracles, because He just wasn't known for this to that point. So, why did Mary tell Jesus about this couple being out of wine?
- ⊗ Whatever the case, I wouldn't be surprised if Mary wasn't a bit disappointed at Jesus' response. "Woman," He said, "what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come" (v. 4).
 - Calling His mother "woman" sounds a lot harsher to our ears than it would have to Mary, but still, it's not really a term of endearment, is it? If anything, it's a bit impersonal and formal.
 - The rest of His answer shows that Jesus had a different purpose in mind than Mary. It's clear that Jesus wanted Mary to know that their relationship was now changing from mother and son to that of Lord and disciple.
 - ⊗ Which brings us to one of the greatest *non sequiturs* in the Bible. A *non sequitur* is a statement, conclusion, or reply that has nothing to do with the previous statement. It doesn't fit with the rest of the conversation; like two puzzle pieces that don't go together. An example would be if I were to say, "It's raining outside, so elephants can fly."
 - Mary comes to Jesus with the news that the family is out of wine. Jesus tells her that His hour has not yet come, making it clear that this isn't His issue. So, you'd expect Mary to walk away – maybe a bit disappointed – but then trying to figure out another way to fix the problem. But she doesn't. Instead she tells the servants, "Do whatever He tells you" (v. 5).
 - Think of that ... there's nothing in Jesus' response that would make her think He was going to tell the servants to do anything. Her directions to the servants make no sense after what Jesus just said. It seems like a huge *non sequitur*.
 - ⊗ Yet, there's one thing that ties all of the pieces of this interaction together so that it does all make sense. Despite His response, Mary had incredible faith in her Son as the Son of God. Going to the servants, she tells them to do whatever Jesus says. In spite of His response, Mary knew that Jesus would actually answer her request. She may not have known the "how" or "when" of His answer, but she knew that once she committed the situation to Jesus, it was out of her control. He would take care of it, without a doubt.
 - And Mary's faith rang true. Jesus not only took care of the situation, He did so with gusto. Filling six jars with 180 gallons of water, Jesus miraculously changed it into wine. And this was no cheap, boxed wine from Safeway; this was the very best of wines. This was a wedding gift of extreme value, so much so that if there happened to be any wine left after the wedding, the couple could sell it for a nice financial cushion to start their married life.

II. Jesus' cross gives us confidence in God's answer.

- ⊗ My dear friends, have you ever felt like Mary? You cry out to God, but it seems like He's not listening or helping? Have you ever felt like your prayers are going no further than the ceiling in the room that you're praying?
 - Take heart, you're not the first to feel that way. In Psalm Six, King David says that he is in great anguish; that he's flooding his bed with tears. He cries out, "But You, O Lord – how long?" (Ps 6:3).
 - Jesus' disciples were scared to death in a storm at sea while Jesus was in the boat sleeping. They cried out, "Lord, don't You care if we drown?" (Mk. 4)

- St. Paul prayed to the Lord three times to take away his thorn in the flesh, but the Lord refused.
- We all have times when we cry to the Lord for relief, but it just seems as if God doesn't answer; times when we feel like Mary: we've made a request to God but we've been rebuffed. You've had so many treatments; so many doctors' appointments, included with countless prayers asking God to help you with your condition; your pain and suffering. You've tried more times than you can count to find an answer to your family conflict; to work hard and get ahead of your debt; to be a good Christian witness to your friend, neighbor, co-worker or family, but it seems like God is just closing His eyes and plugging His ears to your dilemma.
- ✘ The reality is, my friends that God does hear your prayers and He does answer them all. And like, Mary you and I can commit our problems to Jesus, knowing that He will take care of them. David knew that. In Psalm six, right after he complains about his terrible weeping, David says, "The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord accepts my prayer" (Ps. 6:9). It didn't look as if God was answering his prayer, but David knew, in faith that He would.
- You see, it might not be in the way that we hope or expect, but God will do it! Do you think Mary expected Jesus to create water from wine? I think Jesus' response probably took her by surprise. When the disciples cried out to Jesus for help, did they expect Him to quiet the sea? I don't think so, because they were astonished at what He did. And I'm pretty sure Paul didn't expect the answer he received when God told him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Yet that answer allowed Paul to grow to the point where he would say, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ...I am content with weaknesses ... For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).
- ✘ Yes, you and I can also commit our situations to Jesus, knowing that He will; that He does answer them. How do we know? Because of His hour that has now come; that is Jesus' "hour" of suffering and death. He told Mary that the wedding of Cana in our text was not His hour. But in John 12:23, when the Greeks came to meet Jesus, He said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."
- That was the beginning of His Passion, leading to His cross, which is Jesus' promise; His guarantee that He will hear and answer all of our prayers. It's there at the cross that Jesus bore our sin; the punishment we deserved and it's there that He died in our place. And in His resurrection victory three days later, He made you and me His own. We deserved none of it, yet He did it all because of a love that defies all human understanding.
- ✘ So, given all that Christ has done for you and me, does it make any sense that He would now just ignore our pleas and problems? Not at all! As Paul tells us in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" Jesus is the promise and guarantee that God does hear our every prayer. And His death and His resurrection means that we can commit our cares to Him in full confidence that He will take care of them as He knows best; when He knows best for whatever is best for you and me!
- Just like Mary, King David and Paul – my dear friends, because Jesus has saved you and wrapped you in His baptismal grace, you too can know with certainty that He is well aware of, and actively working in your medical struggle; in the conflicts you have with others; in your financial difficulties and your efforts to share the Good News of Jesus with those around you.

Conclusion

- ⌘ One of Mary Beth's favorite cooking appliances is her *Crockpot Express*. She puts in all the ingredients for a good soup or stew, then turns it on and walks away. Then, when the allotted time is over, the meal is ready to go. She sets it and forgets it.
 - ➔ Jesus calls you and me to do the same with Him. We all have many cares and worries in this life, most of which are beyond our control. Mary was worried about the wedding family, but she knew there was nothing she could do. So she committed the situation to Jesus and she left it all up to Him.
- ⌘ But Jesus is so much more for you and me than some "Forgive-O-Matic" appliance that we can buy for \$19.99 online or TV or at a store. He is our Creator; the one who gave us life and provides for all that we need in this earthly life. He is our Savior; the one who loves us unconditionally, sacrificially and eternally; covering us with His blood and cleansing us of all sin and granting us eternal life.
 - ➔ You are His and He is yours. So as Peter directs us, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God...casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:6-7). Yes, Jesus – He's got it well in hand! Amen.