

Readings:

Isa 62:1-5 (Zion's new name ... as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.)

Ps 36:5-10 (Your love oh Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies...)

**1 Cor 12:1-11 (Concerning Spiritual Gifts - given to all for the common good of all)**

**John 2:1-11 (The wedding at Cana, and Jesus changing water into wine)**

**Collect** for the 2nd Sunday of the Epiphany

God of Feast and fellowship,

Jesus blessed a wedding;

turned water into wine:

let our lives bless you; and

our work reveal the wine of your presence;

through Jesus Christ our Lord

who lives and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

## Notes for the Sermon for Sunday 20 January 2019

### Introduction (prior to the readings):

In our worship time last Sunday morning, I couldn't help thinking that perhaps we should be trusting more in God to speak to each of us, and through us to each other.

I was encouraged by Gerald's reflections on Philippians - that we should be:

Giving up (our own control) - Nailing to the cross everything that blocks our walk with God - "Crucifying the old nature"

Holding on (Embrace & cherish the gifts, blessing, positive relationships that God brings to nurture our faith.)

Opening ourselves up to God (Chalice) - Live by the spirit (Gal 5:16), and don't quench the Spirit (eg through sin, wrong priorities)

I liked the active way Gerald got us all to stand and work this out as a cross, an embrace, and a chalice.

This week, one of our readings is from Corinthians concerning spiritual gifts, and how these are given to each of us, by the Spirit, but for the common good of all.

So I thought it might be good to take God at his word this morning on this, and trust in the spiritual gifts God has given amongst us.

In our home group at Minnee's place, we often take some time to read through a scripture, and then silently wait on God for about 10 minutes, to see what He's showing us. We find that He speaks to each of us differently, revealing different insights to each of us.

If you haven't twigged yet, this means you guys are going to help with the preaching this morning!

Of course there won't be time hear from everyone this morning, and we won't have time to reflect for 10 minutes in the middle, so here's what we'll do:

I'll pray and invite the Holy Spirit speak to each of us as we listen to the readings, which Gary and Alison will then bring us. Take some time as you listen to ask God - If you're not used to hearing

from God, Perhaps you could try saying: Excuse me God - what are You wanting to say to us through these readings this morning? It's a conversation - so just be natural.

Then, I'm going to ask a few people what God showed them.. I'm not sure who I'll ask yet - so I'll be asking God to tell me who to ask. So it could be you! But please, it won't be everyone, so apologies in advance if you don't get a turn.

Then, we'll have a look and see what we can make sense of out of it all, and if I can, I'll try and draw some of the strands together, and perhaps give a bit of context.

### Prayer before the readings:

Holy Spirit, You proceed from the Father, and the Son, and come that we might have life. You come to help us to understand the scriptures, and the will of the Father. You distribute the gifts of the Spirit amongst us just as You determine – wisdom, knowledge of things we couldn't know by natural means, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues..

Thank You Holy Spirit for Your presence, and Your gifts amongst us now.

Lord, as we now read and listen to these words of scripture now, fan into flame, your gifts of life among us – bless us with ears to hear, not only what was said to the early church in context, but also what You are saying to us in our context today, through Your gifts to us of wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, and all the others as You determine Lord.

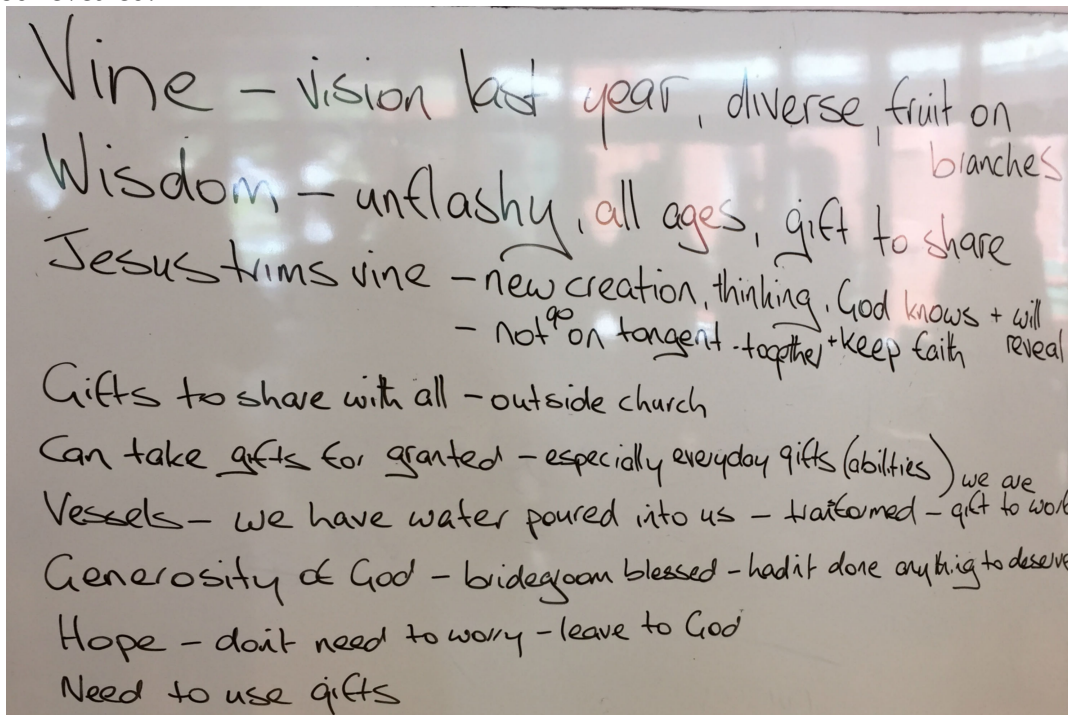
We ask this in faith Holy Spirit, Amen.

### Readings:

1 Cor 12:1-11 (Concerning Spiritual Gifts - given to all for the common good of all)

John 2:1-11 (The wedding at Cana, and Jesus changing water into wine)

What God revealed:



We discussed all these points – actually our readings were ‘seen’ through the prophetic lense of the picture of the Vine, for All Saints – and finished with another look at the collect:

**Collect** for the 2nd Sunday of the Epiphany  
God of Feast and fellowship,  
Jesus blessed a wedding;  
turned water into wine:  
let our lives bless you; and  
our work reveal the wine of your presence;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **Here's my take on the context (mostly not directly used in the talk):**

Isa 62:1-5 (Zion's new name ... as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.)

Ps 36:5-10 (Your love oh Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies...)

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### **1 Cor 12:1-11**

- **It's not about you**, and how specially God has gifted you. **It's about God, and what He wants to do among us as a community.**

- This was particularly a problem in the Corinthian church, set in a city driven by fierce competition for wealth & status, and by deep social & economic divisions. **Paul was reminding the church to align itself in the character of 'a downwardly mobile Jesus' Christ instead.**

- Gifts are **bestowed**, not for personal advancement, but **for building up of the Body** (common good).

- **'For the common good'** (v7) is a key to unlocking **Paul's vision of alternative communities emerging in which selfishness, greed & ambition will be replaced by love, sharing of resources, human solidarity & neighbourliness.** This has roots deep within the biblical story of Israel, but has now become universally possible through the Cross and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### **John 2:1-11**

John's **purpose** in writing his gospel is that **'you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'** (from John 20:31).

**To this end, John gives a number of signs (8) which mark Jesus out, pointing to the nature of who he really is, and heralding the new way His Messiah-ship is bringing in contrast to the old.**

**Turning water into wine is the first sign of Jesus' ministry.**

- The **water jars** were used for **ritual cleansing** by the Jews, and so **represent the old order of Judaism.**

- **The water became wine**, recognised by the master of ceremonies as **the best wine** of the function, **but unusually left till last.** In turning the water into the best wine, **Jesus indicates he will replace the old order with a new, superior one.**

- The **new order superseding the old & Jesus' more effective cleansing than the old** are **underlined in the passage following, where Jesus cleanses the Temple**, and **indicates** that instead of the Jewish Temple, **Jesus himself is the ultimate 'place' where people can meet God.**

- Lastly **we should view the wedding in Cana against the background of the banquet God had promised to his people** - eg in Isaiah 25:6

On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare  
a feast of rich food for all peoples,

a banquet of aged wine –  
the best of meats and the finest of wines.

**Surface:** Jesus miraculously rescues the wedding & the honour of the hosts.

**Deeper level: & more importantly -** The miracle itself is a prophetic act - symbolising the festive arrival of the new messianic age - the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The wedding at Cana launches Jesus' ministry, one which brings life, and gives rise to celebration!  
It also foreshadows the wedding banquet, between Christ and his bride - the church.

**Is it saying something to us today?** Walk with me. Follow me. Drink my wine. We have much to celebrate. (That's what I believe Jesus is showing me - thank you Jesus).