

January 16, 2022

John 2:1-11

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!
Amen.

Our passage this morning from the gospel of John opens with four well intended words on behalf of the author, “On the third day...” Forget everything from this point on and immediately those hearing John’s gospel, which was composed some 60-80 years after Christ’s death, and the church throughout all of history would pick up on these key words and immediately their minds would be transported to Easter Day – the third day when Jesus arose from the death. Put all else aside and those first few words tell us so much about what is about to come. These four words, “on the third day” are where we find our hope. They are essential to our faith. They are at the core of all we cling to and what we have come to believe through the power of the Holy Spirit. On the third day sparks light into the darkness of sin in our world. On the third day breathes life into where once there was only death. On the third day makes the promise of new beginnings where it seemed there were none. On the third day blossoms forth hope where previously there was only despair. On the third day transforms everything we once held to be true into the reality of that which the world deemed impossible. On the third day radiated the abundance of God’s love for all.

On the third day ... perhaps the church needs to say it more often. On the third day ... perhaps we need to proclaim it beyond the doors of this building more often – to a friend who has nowhere to turn and has given up on life, to a coworker battling an addiction, to a loved one just diagnosed with an incurable disease, to a family grieving the death of a loved one. On the third day ... he will rise again. On the third day ... he did rise again. On the third day ... everything changed. On the third day ... there is hope for whatever it is we are experiencing.

Where do we need to hear these four words, “on the third day?” Where do we need the transformational power of what God has done in Christ to bring death out of new life? Where do we need the hope of these words? Where do we need the abundance of God’s love that shine through these words?

These few words are more powerful than we can ever imagine. Yet, we do our best to steer clear of them and seek comfort in other words, other things, and we often do our best to utter words that run so counter to these words.

Why is it so difficult? A good question we all long for an answer to. The Bible reveals to us many things and one of those things is the fact of how difficult or rather how impossible it is to not fall victim to the evils of sin. How hard it is to trust in words of God such as, “on the third day”; yet, how easy it is to be swayed and led by different words. This is exactly why we need to repeatedly hear the possibility of the impossible. This is exactly why we need the Holy Spirit’s guidance in speaking to us, revealing to us, and equipping us with the ability to believe the sign of God’s abundant, extravagant, forgiving, transforming, radiating, and everlasting grace as it was and continues to be revealed through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
(Second article of *The Apostles’ Creed*)

On the third day, Jesus turned water into wine. He revealed the abundance of God’s kingdom that there is enough grace upon grace for all. He opened our eyes to see the Word made Flesh truly does dwell among us. He made manifest that we share in carrying out kingdom work. Notice, Jesus could have performed this miracle alone, but he chose the servants to go and fill the jars with water. He chose the disciples to assist with the feeding of the multitudes. He chose those at the tomb of Lazarus to roll away the stone. On the third day, he chose Mary upon her arrival at his empty tomb to go and tell the disciples what had happened, that he rose from the dead.

On the third day ... our promise, our hope, our God doing the impossible and showing us so much about God's love for the world and all God created!