

## Message for 1-16-22

Thank you Karen for your Word About Life last Sunday. I encourage everyone to go on YouTube and listen again to the sermon or listen for the first time. I very much appreciated her expressions of wonder and insight. She said an epiphany was like, "OH" followed by a "disconcerting "ummmmm." I think I would love to do a responsive reading with these two expressions. For example, God loves you! OH! That love requires something of us. "Ummmm." Perhaps you can think of the epiphanies of your own life that evoked the double expression of awe and concern.

Our gathering today has this element in it, but I would reverse it.

We are meeting online instead of in person because of COVID, "ummmmm." We are able to meet online and stay together despite COVID, OH!

The time of COVID pandemic has been a season of epiphany. We have had many OH and ummm moments these past two years. We have had OH and ummm insights regarding race, income inequality, workplace justice, and how deep and widespread our national division is. The awe and concern has revealed itself. Let us bring this epiphany dynamic to weddings this morning.

Weddings can have this epiphany dynamic. I remember for my daughter's wedding feeling the double "OH" and "ummmmm." My daughter Amelia says, "John and I want to get married." OH! This is how much it is going to cost. Ummmmmm.

Nearly everyone has been a part of planning a wedding and the reception after the ceremony. We know how involved and demanding it can be. There can be all kinds of surprises and epiphanies. And so, it with today's Word About Life.

### **The Wedding at Cana**

*On the third day (**day six of the week**) there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' (**The verse of boundaries and detachment**). His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone*

water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, **each capable** of holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' (**Why were the jars for purification empty on the day before the Sabbath?**) And they filled them up to the brim. (**Spilling over with abundance**). He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So, they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), (**not the power brokers at the party but the servants**) the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. (After your 5<sup>th</sup> beer you do not care what it tastes like). But you (**the bridegroom but not the correct or true bridegroom**) have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

The disciples believed in Jesus for two reasons. 1.) he turned water into wine, and 2.) and more importantly Jesus showed them something new about God that resonated deep in their souls as being true. Jesus showed them that as good as the wedding and party of life is, the best is yet to come.

Life is a wedding. Putting things together that were separated. It is celebrating the creation of a whole new world when people make the commitment to build a new life together.

Gus from Lonesome Dove and Jesus share a conviction that life is like a party and like a wedding reception it can be unpredictable. Will there be enough food? Will the band be any good? Will the parents of the bride and groom get along? You do not know but you find reason to celebrate anyway. In fact, the aim of spirituality is what I just said. Life is a party even though it is unpredictable and uncertain.

The story is an epiphany story with the epiphany dynamic of OH and ummm. The promise of our faith and trust in the deep goodness of life is "the best is yet to come." OH, I like that hopeful promise. Ummmm, is it true and what could that be?

I do not want to throw out this epiphany like wishful thinking or pollyannish tripe. We must have rigorously honest discussions with each other and hold on to each other as we talk. What does the promise of "the best is yet to come" mean for you. For the disciples of Jesus in their poverty, social marginalization, and political

oppression, it meant the best of God's promises were yet to come. What does it mean for people with failing health and shrinking lives?

Perhaps, the best is yet to come means the ultimate healing that comes when we cross the threshold of this life to the next.

Maybe, it means our legacy of love is carried on in amplified ways through our children and grandchildren.

Maybe, it means our bodies enrich the growth of a future forest.

Maybe, it means our molecules contribute to the ever-expanding continuum of existence.

Maybe, it means we are reunited with our loved ones and our soul mates.

Please note I am offering different ideas of what it means that the best is yet to come that honors all of the campfires of Shadow Rock. However, shared by everyone at every campfire is an invitation to trust that life is more powerful than death and love is greater than fear. This is the epiphany at the wedding in Cana. The best wine is yet to come.