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1 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11
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When the wine failed, Jesus' mother asked him to do something. When the wine failed, Jesus' mother asked him to do something. It is a great story. Jesus and his mother attend a wedding at Cana of Galilee and he rather famously turns water into wine. If you go there today, there is an Arab salesman who will run up to you with a little pottery gadget. He pours water in the top and red liquid flows out the bottom and he says, "It's a miracle." Then he asks you for 60 shekels. Jesus is out there sweating, and it is interesting that Jesus' first miracle happens in the face of failure and disappointment. When the wine failed and Jesus' mother asked him to do something.

Disappointment, it's a common mood that we have. John Cheever, the novelist, says that it is the predominant mood of Americans in our century. We have such high expectations. We want everything to go so well, but then there is the inevitable disappointment, lots of failure all around. We have personal disappointments. The economy has disappointed us. Government, all kinds of places, leaders, people we've looked up to have disappointed us. We have our own heartbreaks, our own illnesses.

The news from Haiti. On Tuesday this past week, there was an earthquake in Haiti. We scrambled to try to get news. We knew, and not only do we have so many friends down there, but four from our own church were in Haiti at the time. It was not just disappointment, it was almost grief, panic. I was about to walk into a meeting on Tuesday night and I had my phone on vibrate, and it was right at that point that I finally got word from Kevin Wright, "We're here, we're all right." Disappointment, the news, staggering.

I think it's important that when the wine failed, Jesus was there. When there was disappointment and failure, Jesus was there. When the wine failed, Jesus' mother asked him to do something. I tried to picture Jesus and his mother at this wedding. Did she eye one of the bridesmaids and nudge him a little? Did you notice her? Was she hoping her son would finally get married? The mother of Jesus. Often we think of the mother of Jesus as a symbol for the church. Maybe there's a message in here that when the wine fails, when there's failure and disappointment, the church ought to do something. And the church should do something. God calls us to be the people of God. God calls us to be the Body of Christ. We are a church home. We're the shelter from the stormy blast and yet, a church is always just a church. Sometimes some of our most painful disappointment comes from the church itself, that we expect so much from. The church can't brag that we're always the church that we ought to be.

You know, there's an old ordination joke. I don't know if it's funny to anybody except the clergy going through. The story is the guy goes before the committee to be asked questions to see if he should be ordained, and someone asks, "Why do you want to go in the ministry?" And he responds by saying "I love the people." And the questioner says, "Have you actually gotten to know the people?" It's a funny joke.

People, that's all we have here, isn't it? You say, "Here's the church and here's the steeple, open the door and there's just people." That's just all we have here, and we try to love each other. We try to love each other. We try to be this body of Christ that Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians. You're the body; you're different from each other but you try to hang together; you try to love each other. It's gangly at times.

I just flew in last night from a meeting in Louisville. I'm representing Methodism in a series of conversations with Roman Catholics and Lutherans about theology. We're trying to come to agreement about the significance of Jesus Christ so we can also be one in our mission to the world, and one of the things we have to talk about in there is the way that the church – over the years have hurt each other so very much. We don't need any enemies outside the church because inside the church we have hurt each other so very much. There's so much division within the church. That's not a bad thing. A great Catholic theologian says that sometimes in church life, there might be an eruption, strong emotions, and people get upset about this. He said we shouldn't. He said that what it is is how people feel, and it's a safe place where they can express their feelings. We want them to do so. I try to think about differences in the church. It's not a bad thing, but something to help us to become the church that God wants us to be. I thought about the division among denominations and the way that works out. I'm sure God's not that pleased that we have different denominations but maybe it's good. Maybe the Roman Catholics remind us that the church is old and that we should have great reverence and worship. Then you have the Pentecostals to remind you that maybe you sit too stiffly in your pew and you need to show a little bit of emotion. The Baptists remind us that the Bible really matters. The Presbyterians...there's something, I know...I'm kidding. We try together to be the body – it's so interesting when Paul says to the church *You are the Body*. It was a common image. Emperors would say that to people, "You're the body." Generals would say that to the soldiers, "You are a body." What they meant by that was "You little people don't cause any trouble. You just toe the line. You just do as you are told. Don't speak out." Paul inverts that image and Paul says we all matter. We're all called to thrive, and Paul says it is actually the little people that matter the most.

Do you know who our most important church members are? It's not those of us who are up front. It's not those who have the most money and it's not those who have been here forever. Our most important church members are those in the Trailblazers Sunday School Class. It's a special needs class for kids who don't just easily fit in everywhere else, and we always defer to them as the weakest who are the most important in the Body of Christ.

We felt pain in the Body of Christ this week when the news came from Haiti, so sad, so tragic. We know so many people there. Kevin is going to come talk to you in a minute. What I want to say for now is this. I've nagged you before with a Haitian proverb. I'm not nagging today, I'm pleading with you for help. Haitians often say "God gives but God doesn't share." God gives but God doesn't share." What they mean by that is that God has given us enough down here but it's up to us to do the sharing. God has given us what our friends in Haiti so very desperately need. I will encourage you to share, and the other thing that we must do is pray. When the wine failed, Jesus mother asked him to do something. She, if you will, prayed. She asked Jesus to do something. This is what the people of God do, we pray, we pray. We have so much to pray for right now.

I was in an e-mail conversation yesterday with a missionary down in Haiti, and he shared with me the tragic news of two students who had come up through a school that we had sent off to college and now have been pronounced dead. Omnilore, the young pastor there that I laid hands on and ordained in September, his brother-in-law has been killed. Vanessa on our own staff, on our administrative staff, her entire family lives in Port-au-Prince, and the earthquake was Tuesday and this is Sunday and Vanessa has not yet heard from her family. We pray. We ask God to help. And sometimes we need to be stretched in our praying. I had my children on a trip years ago and we got them in the late afternoon to go into an Episcopal service of prayer late in the afternoon. They thought that was dad's idea of a good time, and we went into the service and we read this whole service out of a prayer book. You just read prayer after prayer after prayer. And when we walked out, they said, "I don't get that. I thought prayer was just when you pray from your heart. What is this, reading these prayers? Who'd you pray for in there?" My oldest daughter said, "Well, we prayed for the Queen." I said, "Have you ever prayed for the Queen before?" She said "No." I said, "Have you ever prayed for the President before?" She said "No." We complain about the President. We complain about politicians, we complain about the governor, we complain about the mayor, we complain about all kinds of people who would try to lead us, but do we take that much energy to pray for them?

When the wine failed, Jesus' mother asked him to do something. And what he would have us to do is to love, to ask him to do something and to be the Body of Christ. Tomorrow is the Martin Luther King holiday, I think Dr. King's best saying had to be this: "Love is the only force capable of turning an enemy into a friend." Love is the only force capable of turning an enemy into a friend. Love is the only force capable of helping the people in Haiti. Love is the only force that can make the church be the Body of Christ. And so, we pray, we pray. We do all that we can and then we pray. We say "Lord Jesus, can you do something? We need a miracle."