

Lent Devotional March 10, 2025

Scripture

John 2:1-12

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. 9 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), the steward called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

Devotion

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It is no surprise to anyone that in the first few centuries following Jesus' earthly ministry and before the canonization of Scripture, women's leadership in the early church was a hotly contested topic. The journey of my recent research has led me into the realm of New Testament redaction criticism, specifically asking questions about gender. There is substantial evidence that women's stories have been redacted out of many early Christian texts. In a context when redactors erased women's names, silenced their voices, diminished their actions, and erased their leadership, the Gospel of John kept this story. John 2:1-12—about a named woman who speaks and leads others—is a treasure. Mary's words and leadership were recorded in this story. Because of that redactional choice, her voice and leadership remain important to this day.

This story, and the choices of its redactors, remind us of the importance of listening to the voices on the margins. Mary is the miracle-maker in this story. Sure, Jesus is the one who changed the water to wine, but Mary noticed the problem, implored Jesus to act, and directed the servants to act as well. Without her, we would not have this miracle. Often, it is the people silenced by the dominant culture who, like Mary, understand the needs in our communities and how to solve them. Just like Mary, they know how to make miracles happen. One of the lessons of this passage is to listen to people on the margins and to follow their lead.

Who in your community is marginalized and ignored? How can you build bridges to give them a voice? What internal reflection do you need to do in order to open your ears and listen to them? What would it take for you to learn how to follow their lead?

Prayer

Gracious God, at a time when women's stories were being erased, we thank you that this story was not erased from the Gospel of John. Thank you for the reminder that the people on the margins have

important voices and leadership skills in our communities. Just as Jesus and the servants listened to Mary and followed her lead, transform our hearts and minds to listen to and follow marginalized people in our own communities. Amen.