

7. FUN LOVING JESUS (JOHN 2:01-11) 02/19 /12
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO FOR FUN? THERE IS SUCH A GREAT VARIETY OF FUN LOVING ACTIVITIES: HORSE BACK RIDING OR HOW ABOUT MOTORCYCLES? BULL RIDING OR HANG GLIDING - BUNGEE JUMPING? CAMPING, HIKING, DANCING, GAMBLING OR HOW ABT RACING CARS? FOR SOME IT IS T.V. GAMES LIKE X-BOX, Wii OR ENDLESS GAME PACKAGES WITH SLINGO, ETC. THERE ARE COMPUTER GAMES, CARD GAMES, BOARD GAMES GALORE. WHAT IS THE MOST **UNUSUAL THING** YOU HAVE EVER DONE FOR FUN - JUST FOR FUN? I SOMEWHAT ENVY THE FUN LOVING TIMES OF OUR ATCHISON SENIORS IN DAYS GONE BY - ALL THE JUKE-JOINTS THAT USE TO BE SCATTERED AROUND TOWN. CUTTING A RUG WAS MORE THAN AN EXPRESSION IT WAS A REGULAR FUN LOVING ACTIVITY - HOUSES WERE CLEARED OF FURNITURE TO MAKE ROOM FOR DANCING & PARTYING. TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE SUCCUMBED TO THE HUMDRUM & DRUDGERY ROUTINES OF LIFE TO NOT MAKE ENOUGH TIME FOR PERSONAL & FAMILY FUN - **FUN JUST FOR THE SAKE OF FUN**. WIDE OPEN FUN IS GREAT FOR THE BODY, SOUL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING!

JOHN 2 GIVES US A LOOK-SEE AT **FUN LOVING JESUS**. I LIKE TO THINK HE WOULD HAVE TRAVELED TO THE WEDDING PARTY BY MOTORCYCLE, IF HE COULD HAVE..... BUT JESUS LIKED TO HAVE FUN & FREQUENTLY! WE FIND JESUS THROUGHOUT THE GOSPELS ATTENDING MANY FESTIVALS & DINNER PARTIES. JESUS HAD A VERY ACTIVE SOCIAL LIFE OF FUN-LOVING ACTIVITIES. WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT WAS SO? IT IS NOT A DIVINE TRICK ON OUR HUMAN DESIRE TO HAVE FUN BUT A GODLY AFFIRMATION OF IT. THING OF IT WAS, PEOPLE LOVED BEING AROUND FUN LOVING JESUS & SO HE WAS AT THE TOP OF THEIR LIST OF INVITEES.

JESUS WAS PERFECTLY AT HOME AT THIS WEDDING FEAST. THIS WAS/IS A PARTY-HARDY TIME IN JEWISH LIFE. JESUS WAS NO SEVERE, AUSTERE KILLJOY - HE LOVED TO SHARE IN THE HAPPY REJOICING OF PARTY TIME. IT MAY COME AS AN AFFRONT TO OUR WESTERN MINDSETS BUT JESUS WAS NOT A STUCK IN THE MUCK, DOWN IN THE FACE PURITAN. AN EARLY BOYHOOD IMPRESSION OF MINE FROM MY HARD-SHELL BAPTIST AUNT JOHNNIE BELL WAS THAT CHRISTIANS COULD NOT HAVE FUN - LIFE WAS TOO SERIOUS & SOMBER FOR THAT FOOLISHNESS. WHAT A RELIEF IT WAS FOR ME TO BE RESCUED BY VINTAGE, 100 PROOF JESUS. JESUS LOVED TO LAUGH & HAVE FUN - THANK YOU JESUS! DON'T YOU EVER LET ANYONE ELSE TELL YOU DIFFERENTLY.....

HERE WE HAVE AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF JESUS' COMING OUT MINISTRY A SIMPLE DOWN TO EARTH EVENT THAT WOULD HAVE HUGE IMPLICATIONS FOR JESUS & HIS FOLLOWERS. A JEWISH WEDDING FEAST/PARTY LASTED SEVEN DAYS WITH FRESH GUESTS ARRIVING EACH DAY. WINE FLOWED FREELY AT THESE FESTIVALS. "WITHOUT WINE," SAID THE RABBIS, "THERE IS NO JOY." THIS IS NOT TO SAY THEY WERE DRUNKARDS BUT IN PALESTINE WINE WAS ESSENTIAL. DRUNKENNESS WAS IN FACT A GREAT DISGRACE. ANY TIME THE WINE FAILED WOULD HAVE BEEN A PROBLEM BECAUSE HOSPITALITY IN

THE EAST WAS/IS A SACRED DUTY. AT A WEDDING, IT WOULD SHAME THE BRIDE & GROOM TO RUN OUT OF WINE. A GREAT HUMILIATION!

SO MARY CAME TO JESUS TO TELL HIM (AS IF HE DID NOT ALREADY KNOW), "THEY HAVE NO WINE." WE MUST READ BETWEEN THE LINES TO DETERMINE THAT SHE EXPECTED JESUS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WAS NOT IDLE CONVERSATION. JESUS FELT THE BRUNT OF HER EXPECTATION THAT HE WOULD TAKE ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE NEWLY WEDS. THE GREEK TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION SOUNDS HARSH EXCEPT FOR THE CONTEXT. THE BETTER RENDERING WOULD BE, "NEVER YOU MIND, DO NOT WORRY. LEAVE IT TO ME." WHICH MAKES MORE SENSE WHEN MARY FOLLOWED WITH, "DO WHATEVER HE ASK OF YOU." MARY KNEW HER EXPECTATION OF JESUS WOULD BE SATISFIED.

WE ARE TO GET A GRASP OF WHAT IS GOING ON HERE! JESUS, SON OF GOD, MESSIAH, KING OF ISRAEL, AT A VERY COMMON SETTING & OVER A MINOR DETAIL - IN TERMS OF THE COSMIC ORDER OF THINGS - "WE RAN OUT OF WINE," - CHOSE TO ENTER INTO THE LIFE STORY WITH THE BRIDE & GROOM. THUS FAR IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, JESUS HAD NOT DONE ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY. THINGS WERE ABOUT TO CHANGE!

THE WEDDING FEAST WAS PREGNANT WITH MEANING FOR THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY. THE JEWS EXPECTED THE MESSIAH TO COME LIKE THE GROOM (JESUS) TO THE BRIDE (THE JEWS) WITH A GREAT CELEBRATION (THE WEDDING FEAST). JESUS IS AFFIRMING THAT THEIR EXPECTATION IS REALIZED IN HIM. PARTY TIME HAS COME - JESUS (AS THE MESSIAH) IS HERE! LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL..... THEN IT IS LIKE A NEEDLE SCRATCHING THE RECORD - EEEEEK.....OUT OF WINE. COULD BE END OF THE PARTY.

JESUS ENTERED THEIR LIFE STORY AS HE WILL ENTER OUR OWN LIFE STORIES WHEN DIFFICULTIES & TROUBLES ARISE. JESUS WILL NOT BE AN IDLE BYSTANDER. WHEN IT IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE/EVENT FOR US, IT IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE/EVENT FOR JESUS. HE DOES NOT TURN HIS BACK ON US. WILL NOT FORSAKE US.

TAKE NOTICE THAT FOR JESUS TO DO HIS PART HE REQUIRED FOR THOSE IN NEED TO GET INVOLVED IN THE SOLUTION BY DOING THEIR PART. THE SERVANTS (ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSEHOLD) WAS CALLED UPON TO DO THEIR PART IN EXPECTANT OBEDIENCE & FAITH. SIX EMPTY WATER JARS - FILL THEM. THEY MUST HAVE THOUGHT, "WE NEED WINE, NOT WATER." NOT AN EASY TO DO TASK WHEN THERE WAS NO RUNNING WATER. HOW MANY TRIPS TO THE WATER WELL DID IT TAKE? EACH OF THE 6 JARS WOULD HOLD ABOUT 20-30 GALLONS OF WATER. THAT IS A LOT OF BUCKETS.....NOW WHAT?

AGAIN THE SERVANTS MUST ACT IN OBEDIENCE & FAITH - TAKE SOME WATER (NOW WINE) TO THE STEWARD FOR TASTING. THEY HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH A THING BEFORE - WAS THEIR JOB AT RISK BY TROUBLING THE STEWARD WITH DIPS OF WATER?

WHEN JESUS ENTERS OUR STORIES WE ARE CALLED TO DO OUR PART BY RESPONDING IN OBEDIENCE & FAITH. IT PROBABLY LOOKED LIKE BUSY WORK TO THE SERVANTS. MUTTERED ALL THE WAY, "WHAT WE NEED IS MORE WINE,

NOT WATER.” OFTEN TIMES WE FOCUS ON OUR NEED & NOT OUR PART TO THE SOLUTION. IT WILL NOT TAKE CARE OF ITSELF. IN SOME WAYS, THAT IS WHERE WE ARE ON OUR NEEDS FOR AN ASSOCIATE MINISTER & THE POWERHOUSE BUILDING. JESUS ENTERS OUR STORY AS WE GET INVOLVED IN MEETING THE SOLUTION. WE GOTTA DO OUR PART IN FAITH & OBEDIENCE! THIS IS SO IN OUR LIVES AS WELL.

GREATLY INCREASED JOY & FUN WAS REALIZED WHEN THE WEDDING PARTY NOTICED THE NEW WINE WAS OF MUCH GREATER QUALITY & TASTE THAN THEY HAD EXPECTED. USUALLY BY THIS STAGE IN THE WEDDING FEAST ALL THE GOOD WINE WAS GONE. NOBODY WOULD NOTICE THAT BECAUSE THEIR TASTE BUDS WERE DULLED BY THE ALCOHOL. BUT THIS NEW WINE WAS SO AWESOME-LY BETTER THAT IT OVERWHELMED THE TASTE SENSES WITH THE GOODNESS OF ITS FLAVOR! JESUS MORE THAN MEETS OUR EXPECTATIONS & NEEDS, HE GREATLY EXCEEDS THEM. THE GOOD TIMES & THE FUN REALLY IS MULTIPLIED & INCREASED FOR THE WEDDING PARTY! AND IT IS SO FOR US!

JESUS CHOSE TO REVEAL HIS GLORY WITH HIS FIRST MIRACULOUS SIGN AT A WEDDING PARTY. **HOW FUN WAS THAT!** JESUS KEEPS SURPRISING & ENTERING OUR STORIES AT SOME OF THE LEAST LIKELY TIMES. WE MUST BE ALERT - DO OUR PART IN OBEDIENCE & FAITH - BE EXPECTANT FOR JESUS TO DO HIS PART.