

John 2:1-11

January 20, 2019

“Just Like Cana’s Jars”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Sanctity of Life/2nd Sun. af. Epiphany

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

Six stone jars...

Six stone jars crash the party at Cana.

Six stone jars stand guard at the wedding.

Six stone jars stand for the purifying.

Six stone jars can handle about twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

Hard stone, heavy stone...

The jars lurk in the shadows.

The jars intimidate the guests.

The jars limit the festivities.

Six stone jars keeping watch.

Do you see them standing guard?

Oh! If these jars could talk, what would they say?

They would say, “We know your name. We know who you are.”

They’d say, “We’ve witnessed your secrets.”

They’d say, “We’ve seen the skeletons.

We’ve ledgered your indiscretions.

We’ve logged your vices, the private ones.

We’ve studied your immoralities and scrutinized your deficiencies.”

They’d testify, they’d tattle for all to hear,

and they’d say, “You with the greedy fingers, you need purification.”

They’d accuse, they’d indict before God and everyone,

and they’d say, “You with the lustful eyes, you require a cleansing.”

These jars...

They’d announce at the top of their lungs, “You there, with the arrogant heart.”

They’d bark, “You with the fiery tongue, you must soak; you must drown.”

If these jars could talk, they’d say,

“You’re just going to screw it all up again.

You’ll ruin this one too like always.”

[Life Issues]

Life issues confront us just like six stone jars.
Life issues hit us over the head and call us out.

Life issues such as experiments on embryos, assisted suicide, and abortion,
they affect you.

These matters,
where the devil deceives people into viewing death as a solution to distress,
they involve you.

These conversations about disability, depression, dementia, they do apply to you.

These debates about infertility, contraception, and unexpected pregnancy,
about discomfort and diagnoses,
about abuse and addiction
and grief and guilt,
they concern you – whether you like it or not.

And that's exactly why we don't want to address them, isn't it?
That's precisely why we'd rather have no big deal made of such evils.
We realize that once the fingers start pointing,
there are more fingers pointing back at us.

We recognize that if the convicting begins,
our case and its iniquities will come up way too soon.

You have your own indiscretions, don't you?
You have your secrets and skeletons, your mistakes and failures.

You've gratified your flesh's appetites.
You've lent your voice to popular sentiments but bitten your lip about Godly truths.
You've contemplated violence against somebody or even your own body
to lessen suffering.

You've neglected responsibilities to family
and discarded obligations to community.

You've ignored pleas for help and overlooked opportunities to save the vulnerable.

You've ignored God's doctrines
when they've become uncomfortable or even just inconvenient.

Then Jesus makes them repeat sweet things.
Filled to overflowing, the stone jars proclaim atonement offered.

These jars declare everything Jesus secured by his suffering and death
on that cross: amends made, price paid, debts settled.

They shout accounts balanced, wrath exacted, punishment satisfied, justice served,
sins forgiven, offenders exonerated.

The Lord Jesus causes six stone jars
to ring out a new song of the Father's compassion,
resurrection everlasting, heavenly kingdom, and household inherited.

He draws out of these jars promises instead of regrets,
joy instead of guilt,
hope replacing fear for every feast invitee.

He coaxes forth crescendoing tones of sanctity and significance and salvation
that embrace each wayward woman and meandering man.

He rules as Interceder for whom no situation's too tiny,
no condition's too trivial,
no cause too hopeless or lost.

He reigns as Redeemer, crucified and risen,
for whom impossible, terminal, tragic, chronic, or uncertain
only means opportunity.

From age to age unto eternity, He is the same,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

[Conclusion]

With stone steadfastness, the jars still echo.
They can echo the challenge with life issues – life issues reverberating.
But Jesus makes life issues echo his sweet things just like Cana's jars. Amen!

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)
