

### **Epiphany 3, 24/01/21, He Who Must be Obeyed.**

What's in a name? think about it! Our name is our identity, who we are and how people see us, and the longer we live with it, the more we become your name. Of course, you know my name is Penny. I am also called Pen, Penelope, Pennylophia, Tuppence, and of course, Bob calls me 'She who must be obeyed!'. The root of this wonderful title goes way back to when we used to watch Rumpole of the Bailey, who gave this deserved and imposing title to his strong-minded wife! What are you saying to me Bob?

She who must be obeyed! And when we read the Gospel today, I wonder if maybe Mary is 'She who must be obeyed' in this wedding party? She knows that the wine has run out at the wedding reception, because the servants run to tell her first. She knows Jesus can help out with that, and so she pretty much orders him to do something about it. At first, he waves her away, saying it really is not his problem, but then she involves the servants and tells them to

do whatever Jesus wants. 'She who must be obeyed' is certainly obeyed. Jesus also does as she asks and turns all that water into quite a lot of wine.

The shift in giving out the orders then goes from Mary to Jesus himself, as he directs the servants to do His bidding, and he becomes 'He who must be obeyed'.

The unquestioning obedience of the servants to go to all the trouble of filling six stone water jars with mere water says something here! Why would they do that just because he asked them to? How could they know that He would turn that water into wine? They didn't! This was the first miracle so nobody was expecting anything special, they hadn't seen previous miracles and thought 'oh yes, He can do this' – they probably moaned that it was a waste of their time, or thought Jesus was maybe just going to serve water, as the guests were so drunk, they wouldn't tell the difference by then. Who knows!

Whatever they thought, and however tedious the task, they **did** obey him. Isn't this the heart of the message here? That we can expect great things in our hearts and lives to happen if we only are obedient to Him? Call him what you like – Jesus, the Messiah, Lord, Son of God – Prince of Peace, all that matters really, is that as Christians, we hear his voice and that we obey Him. 'He who must be obeyed' is calling us now to do his will. We may think that what we do for Jesus is non-consequential, that it is unimportant, ordinary, or trivial, like putting water into a jar, but this is what we would think as humans isn't it? God can transform all that we do for His sake and transform us into his image.

And, as Christians, we may need to learn to look on all our daily tasks, all the trivialities, all the small kindnesses we show others as the start of miracles, and trust Jesus to turn all our efforts into the best they can be for His name's sake. God wants the best for us. The psalm tells us this, that we will work and reap, we will have

prosperity and peace in our hearts. Genesis tells us God works on our behalf, He delivers us from our troubles, and Revelation promises us eternal life and joyous celebration with Him in heaven.

Do we have the faith to fill those water jars, to go to all that trouble in the hope and faith that God himself will fill us with good things and change us into the likeness of Christ? I hope so.

He is the Lamb of God, who, for our sakes became obedient to the cross and died for our sins. He is the fullness of God, omnipresent, all powerful, all seeing, who compressed the whole of godly self into human form for our sakes, in obedience to God the Father. 'He who must be obeyed' needs us to do His will. He knows our names, He knows who we are, He loves us. He is calling us to trust and obey Him and see what happens when we do! And the more we live in obedience to His name, hopefully, the more we become like Him! Amen