Isaiah 62:1–5

**For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. 2The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. 3You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. 4You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. 5For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.**

1 Corinthians 12:1–11

**Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. 3Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.**

**4Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.**

John 2:1–11

**On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2Jeson us also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. 3When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” 4And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” 5His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” 6Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. 9When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom 10and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” 11This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.**

You know when most people imagine Jesus nowadays, the first image that often comes to mind is the typical long-haired, smiling, hippy-like, almost effeminate Jesus kicking around a soccer ball with kids or drawing rainbows with the little ones on His lap. There's nothing offensive about Him at all.  He's the kinder, gentler Savior who wouldn't harm a fly.  Jesus would probably be portrayed as a manly Guy, and yet still not above getting a manicure and sitting down to watch a chick flick with a little wine, a box of chocolates, and plenty of tissues so He can have a good healthy cry.

That just doesn't sound right, does it?  There's just something wrong about portraying Jesus in such a way.  This is simply not the Jesus of Holy Scripture, the One we think we know!  And yet, there are times in Scripture when we encounter a Jesus that doesn't quite fit our image of who He is.  A Jesus who dares to call the ignorant, hard-hearted, unrepentant fools who oppose Him "broods of vipers" and "whitewashed tombs?" That's tough to come to grips with, especially in our "everyone is right and no one is wrong" day and age.  We often think our Jesus would compromise, just agree to disagree.  We don’t like to talk about a Jesus that actually make a whip of cords and chases disrespecting unbelief out of His Father's house?  Our Jesus would never be that mean.  That's not loving behavior!  Our Jesus would schedule a meeting and put it to a vote.  If the majority of the people wanted to defile God's House, then our Jesus would be on board with the spirit of democracy.  He would find more diplomatic, peaceful solutions than resorting to whips and anger.  Is it any wonder that many of those who fancied themselves as deeply devout and religious men were convinced that Jesus was working for the devil?  Their preconceived notions of God didn't match Jesus' ways, so the problem must be with Jesus!  As much as things change, they sadly remain the same.

And then there's our Gospel lesson for today.  "Woman, what does your problem have to do with me?  They're running out of wine?  So what!  And this is my problem, how?" Jesus said this?  I don't know about you, but I would never talk to my mother that way.  Disrespecting the Fourth Commandment was not something that I would ever overtly do!

It seems to me that these words spoken especially to a woman couldn’t possibly come from out perfect and sinless Jesus. Right? Still…we can't get around these words we read today in John's Gospel.  Maybe this is one of those "Scriptural contradictions" that people are always talking about.  Maybe the problem is with us.  Maybe we're hyperactive in classifying such disrespect as "sin."  Bad manners?  Absolutely!  But sin?  Maybe not.

OK. So what if I told you that Jesus never said such a cold and callous thing to His mom?  What I’m saying is our English translation of this very difficult Greek phrase needs to be clarified. First, I would like to use a wooden, word-for-word translation of the Greek, Jesus' response to His mother. It would sound like, "What to me and to you, woman?" Now remember when Jesus addresses His mother as "woman," it's not in some trashy redneck kind of way.  In fact, it's just the opposite. It’s like saying “ma’am.” Not disrespectful but rather respectful.

So what does "What to me and to you" mean?  Here what Jesus is saying is; "What do the two of us have in common with this problem?  How does this problem affect you and me together, my lady?  What do you and I have in common with the solution?  Are you and I going to fix this?" Well maybe that still sounds kind of cold and standoffish, and it still doesn't sound like someone who really wants to help.  But again we’re letting our sinful, worldly understanding be the interpreter.

To our fallen and sinful ears it does sound very much like Jesus is telling His mom that the problem and it's solution doesn't concern Him.  Like saying, “I’m just a guest here. Not my problem. You figure it out.” But listen to what Jesus is saying here.  "What do the two of us have in common with the problem?  Are you and I going to fix this together?" Jesus is talking here about synergism; that sinfully human notion that Jesus does His share and I do mine and together we overcome whatever befalls us.  Jesus is rebuking the false notion that God helps those who help themselves.

What we need to understand is that He's not saying, "What does your problem have to do with me?" Rather, He's gently rebuking Mary by saying, "This is my problem.  This is a 'God problem.' This isn't yours to solve.  What does my divine work here have to do with you?" It's interesting to note that the German translation of this verse picks up on this.  The German translation reads, "What have I with you—with the help and aide of you—to create?" Like; "What have I to create with your help and aide?"

Now, why is all this important to point out?  What does this have to do with us today?  A lot.

I'm sure that I'm not the only one here to ever think that maybe there are times that Jesus is too busy for my problems.  Maybe there are times that Jesus doesn't want to be bothered with my petty problems.  Maybe Jesus really is kind of cold and standoffish.

Well let’s look at Mary.  Why did she go to Jesus with the lament that the wine was running out?  Some might say that she was going to Jesus to try and coax Him into doing something miraculous.  "Son, why don't you dip into that bag of almighty divinity and do mommy a favor?" No, Mary was human just like us!  I have no doubt that she went to Jesus because she was upset.  She basically went to someone she knew would listen to her lament and perhaps assist her in coming up with a plan.  She didn't go to her God and Lord in pious humility.  She went to her son so that she could enlist some help in formulating a way out of the problem.

And what does Jesus do?  He speaks that simple phrase we've been talking about.  With one simple little rebuke Mary has her eyes opened to the reality standing before her.  Remember: Mary stored up all the miraculous things concerning Jesus in her heart and pondered them.  With just one simple little phrase spoken by the Word of God Himself made flesh Mary's little epiphany light bulb, clicks on, remember last week’s children’s message.  Jesus' words of promise/rebuke take her back to the promises first spoken to her by the Angel of the Lord.  Notice: She doesn't take offense at Christ's words.  She doesn't try her plans first and then come back to Jesus as a last resort.  No!  She hears the Word of God, stops what she's doing and obeys. She steps down and lets God work.  God's Word forms and shapes her.  She didn't try to conform God's Word to fit her and her plans and her ideas of how things ought to be.  This is evident in her immediate response to the servants: "Do whatever He tells you."

Do whatever He tells you.  What a simple, yet profound message of faith and life and salvation.  The miraculous thing here is that the servants did just that.  They listened to Mary and, more importantly, to Christ, no matter how crazy or far-fetched or illogical Christ's words may have seemed.  Think about it.  "Fill up these big stone jars with water and then take some to the master of the feast."  They didn't argue.  They didn't try their plans first.  They heard and they obeyed—period.  Faith in action.

My brothers and sisters in Christ: Nothing has changed.  We still encounter problems, great and small.  Christ is still in charge.  He's working on them according to His plan and timeline.  Christ still speaks.  Do we listen and obey?  God still appoints specific hours and times in our lives to make Christ known.  Do we let our Gospel lights shine or do we wait until it's a good time for us?  Christ still uses very simple, perhaps even foolish and illogical means to accomplish His will and make His glory and our salvation known.  He still uses simple Word, water, bread, and wine.  "This is My body.  This is My blood."  It doesn't get any easier than that!  Do we stop our foolish ways and simply respond in obedient faith, or do we pick and choose and tweak and shave and add until we have something we like and we can work with?  "Go and make disciples of all nations by teaching them to obey all that I've commanded you, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."  That's pretty simple.  Teach what Christ says.  Obey what Christ says.  Do whatever He tells you, for this is His plan and He is at work.  Let Him work.  That's faith in action.

May God grant you faithful, humble obedience so that you can let go and let God work His almighty plan of salvation for all mankind; a plan that was made manifest in the flesh and hung on a cross to completely pay for our sins, and the same plan that He continues to make known through you and your faithful confession and life.  Salvation by faith alone in God's grace alone because of Christ alone.  May this be your reality, this day and everyday into all of eternity.  Amen.