

Sermon Title: **“Do Whatever He Tells You”**

Bible: **1 Corinthians 12:1-11 & John 2:1-11**

When: on the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany, January 19, 2025

Where: about 25 people (plus YouTube Live Streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. Who is the Most Important at Weddings?

Today’s Gospel reading of John describes the Wedding at Cana. And there was the first miracle of Jesus to transform water into wine. There are seven miracles in the Gospel of John, and this miracle is found only in John. Have you been to a wedding? Then, have you experienced any miracles? If you were married, do you remember your wedding? Did any miracles take place?

A wedding is a great and joyful ceremony. But to prepare for a wedding requires a lot of consideration, negotiation, energy, time, and money—according to my one and only experience of getting married. Because my wedding ceremony was during summer vacation in Korea while I attended seminary in the United States, it was not easy, but thankfully, Mihyun and I were able to enlist the aid of a nice wedding planner. With the help of the wedding planner and our families in Korea, it seemed like it went smoothly. The wedding photographer was ready; a beautiful dress was chosen; hair and makeup were set; the location

and the catering were reserved. On the wedding day, even though many guests came, there was no lack of food and drink for the guests. So there was no need for the miracle to change water into wine like in the Gospel of John. To me, it all seemed okay, but later I learned that a big mistake had been made.

What makes us attend a wedding? It is to celebrate the new couple, the new family, and their new beginning together. Who is most important at the wedding? In the Gospel of John, there was a wise mother, who guided her son and the servants. Jesus' mother shared her concern with her son, because they ran out of wine. Probably, she knew that her son could be the answer, even though it was not yet the time for Jesus to reveal anything. And she told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." The wise mother did not say, "Do whatever I tell you." She made the space for her son to speak and for the servants to listen, not for herself, but for the wedding, for the guests, and most importantly for the new family.

Who is most important at a wedding? My big mistake was not to make space for the bride to speak and for others to listen. I was not that wise. My family was not that wise. Later I learned that we had made a big mistake. My wife and I nearly divorced, because of this mistake. And if I may, I would like to say that it is a miracle that my wife forgave me, and we have preserved our marriage for these 12 years. To become one is itself a miracle.

2. Many Gifts but the Same Spirit

The purpose of the reading from 1 Corinthians is also to become one. The most famous chapter in 1 Corinthians is chapter 13. "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or

boastful or arrogant or rude....” The main reason why the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church was that they had many gifts, but there was a lack of love. If you know and love any team sports, I believe that you know better than me. Which is more important, star players or team work? For example, some NBA star players gathered on the same team in order to become a champion team. But their plan did not work well, because they still wanted to be star players rather than to build a champion team. Probably, a similar situation happened in the Corinthian Church. As we read today’s Scripture, we learn that there were many gifts, various services, and lots of activities in the Corinthian church. But the Corinthian congregation forgot that all of them were coming from one and the same Spirit. They forgot to be a church. Maybe they wanted to seem better and more impressive, more spotlighted, and in higher positions than others. But these cannot be the reasons to come to church ultimately.

3. Do Whatever He Tells You, as Jesus is Lord

What makes you come to church? What does it mean to be a church? It is okay to come to church to be loved and to love, because we are loved and loving people. It is okay to be served and to serve, because it is what Jesus showed us with the relationship of the disciples. It is okay to help others and to be helped, because we cannot live by ourselves. But if you come to church in order to be a star player, in order to be a lord or boss, and in order for others to listen to you, you might be disappointed, because we are here to listen to God, our Lord. As the wise mother said, we are here to do whatever Jesus tells us. We are the people

who confess that Jesus is our Lord. Sometimes, we cannot totally understand what God tells us. When Jesus tells us to fill jars with water, which does not make sense, we can do it, because it is what Jesus tells us. When Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, and even our enemies, which we do not want to do, we can do it, because it is what Jesus tells us. When Jesus tells us to go into the world with grace and love for peace and justice, which can mean risking our lives, we can do it, because it is what Jesus tells us. How about loving one another in our church as a new family and as one body of Jesus Christ? Does it make sense or not? Do we need to risk our life to love each other? Do we want to love or not? Who is the Lord in your life? Who is the Lord in our church? When Jesus is our Lord, there is love; there is one and the same Spirit; and there is a church. Then, there is a miracle to become one. Who is the Lord in our church?

Closing Prayer

O Lord, you are our Lord! We gather here and now, because you are our Lord. As you told us, please guide us to love one another, to be a church, and to be one body of Jesus Christ. Please lead us to experience the miracle. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!