

When I was in high school, my dad used to let me borrow his company car and take it out on the weekends. It was a 1986 Pontiac 6000. It wasn't the coolest car in the world, but it had this dashboard illuminated by red lights that I thought looked really cool at night. Plus, since it was the company car, dad's company picked up the gas. So one night, my friends and I were out at the Mall goofing off (not really sure I should be telling you this) and I started to drive the car through the parking lot a little carelessly. **At one point, I found myself driving towards a medium strip that consisted of 6 foot section of grass bordered by curbs on both sides.** Using my special teenage logic, I somehow thought the car could just go over this and everything would be fine.

Well, through God's miraculous protection and special love for me, especially on that day, I survived that decision without a scratch. I can't, however, say the same thing about dad's company car. In addition to everything else that was damaged, the mechanic told my dad that he saw something he had never seen before. I had cracked the frame.

Now they were actually able to repair the car, but for years afterward my dad would periodically tell me that it never drove the same again. **He said it always drove like a truck after that.** I'm not sure I can verify that because I don't think I ever was allowed to drive that car ever again. But every so often, my dad would utter that same phrase, "It never drove the same way again."

Repairing things often times means you can't get them as good as the original. This is true with a lot of things. You glue something back together; it's never quite the same. You repair that grout line in the tile, it's never quite the same. Even repairs to our own bodies often

times never quite feel the same. Repairs don't just make things new again. And so this is why it would be a mistake to think that Jesus repairs anything. Repairs make things functional, but not original.

This morning, Jesus comes to the Wedding at Cana in Galilee. He does His first miracle there where He turns the water into wine. And not just any wine, but the best wine. Now, we wouldn't say here that Jesus repaired things. **If Jesus repaired this situation, He would've replaced the good wine that ran out with box wine.** He would've replaced what was missing with something similar, but maybe of lesser quality. But Jesus doesn't do that. He replaces what was lost with something even better.

Last week, we talked about how Epiphany began with some words of Law from John the Baptist. John does a good job describing how bad things are when he preaches. He reminds us that Human nature isn't repairable. We are sinful from birth, David wrote in the Psalms. We are dead in our trespasses and sins, Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus. Original Sin, as defined by, the Small Catechism, is the Total Corruption of our whole human nature. The frame of humanity's righteousness is broken, but it's beyond that. It's not repairable.

In Isaiah 62, our Old Testament reading today, the prophet speaks of the land being desolate. **There is no one to cultivate it; there is nothing growing or planted there.** It is a wasteland. The word forsaken is also used to describe someone who has no hope of being united with another. In both of these metaphors, the lack of hope is clear.

But Isaiah then goes on to talk about this transition from forsaken or desolate to married. He gives us a picture of rejoicing. What was thought to be lost has been redeemed. It will be saved from its destiny of hopelessness and given new life. See, Jesus doesn't repair anything.

That's not the word we use when we talk about the work of God. Jesus renews; He restores; He remakes.

When Jesus appears, He's not coming to fix things. He's coming to remake them. Jesus will not fix the temple later on in this chapter of John by driving out the money changers. He will replace it with Himself. Jesus will be the newer and greater Temple. **When He gives His life later on the cross, He's not coming to repair humanity as if our broken nature could be mended somehow.** He's coming to be the newer and greater sacrifice which will alleviate any other sacrifice ever needing to be done. When He eats and drinks with the disciples to inaugurate the new covenant, He's not adding an amendment to improve the old one. He's introducing a newer and greater Passover which will be for all people. Nothing is repaired here. It's replaced; it's renewed.

Really, throughout the season of Epiphany, there is this sense of things being better all around. There are weddings and wise men with gifts; there are feasts and celebrations; in a couple weeks, the disciples will haul in an abundance of fish even after they tell Jesus they had been fishing all night and caught nothing. It is Epiphany. It is the season of Christ's appearance among us and with that appearance come blessings and joy and newness and abundance.

It's a contrast to the lives of sin that we lead. Our lives of sin express darkness and selfishness and incompleteness. **As you reflect upon your life, you should recognize your sin.** You should look at yourself and be thankful no one sitting here knows the whole truth about you. Otherwise, you would be forsaken like that land in Isaiah. You would be desolate. You would be accused of being a hypocrite and living your life in disguise and no one would talk to you. You are not repairable.

But you will be restored. At the end of your life, following your death, Jesus will resurrect you. Your flesh shall live again. Your broken body with all of its flaws and degeneration will be made new. God is not going to repair you. God is going to renew you. He's going to make you new again, but an even better kind of new. You will be resurrected without sin and its effects on your biology or your psychology.

If you are physically limited and dependent upon others for care in this life, you will leap for joy. **If you are alone, you will be surrounded with friends and community.** If you are in mourning, you will laugh; if you feel hated, you will know love; if you are confined, you will be free. For those of us who have known the depths of brokenness, in Christ, we will come to know the heights of restoration and renewal.

The repairs we settle for in this life are never as good. In fact, they often leave us disappointed. We live with regret trapped in the past about how life once was or we look back to the dreams we once had. We had hoped the repairs were going to fix things and give us our lives back but they didn't exactly turn out as we had hoped.

Our true hope is in the new life we have with Christ. He makes all things new. He makes new wine, even better wine than what there was before. He makes new life; even better than it was when we were young because it will be life without sin. **He will make a new creation, even better because it will be without fear, darkness, sickness and death.** This is our hope-renewal and restoration, not repair.

Epiphany is the season in between Christmas and Lent. It is a continuing of Christmas and even, in some ways, a more glorious celebration. At Christmas, the Savior comes, but during Epiphany, the gifts of abundance and fullness are expressed. The wine is being poured out; weddings and feasts abound. We are seeing a glimpse of our true lives with Christ. At the

same time, Epiphany is giving us a picture of encouragement before the dark days of Lent.

During Lent, our focus is on repentance and the impending sufferings of our Lord. We may give up something to remind us of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. It is in some ways a season of scarcity, of going without.

But during Epiphany, the gifts of Christ are found in abundance. If Christmas is about receiving the gifts, Epiphany is about enjoying them. **Your Savior has come and He has more blessings for you than you can enjoy.** In this life to come, you will lack nothing. You will need nothing because in Christ, you will have everything. It is the season of Epiphany, it is the time to rejoice in the newness of life promised to us by Christ, the generous giver of all gifts and blessings. In His Name, Amen.