

January 19, Epiphany 2C (John 2:1-11)

## **Mary reminds us that sometimes we get involved in the need right in front of us simply because we can.**

by [Charisse R. Tucker](#) in the [January 2025](#) issue

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When I was growing up, the girls in my neighborhood played double Dutch. Unlike other jump rope games, double Dutch requires at least three players. Two of them turn the two ropes (or one very long one tied together at the ends) toward or away from each other in alternating rhythmic motion. The third player determines the right time and then jumps into the middle of the ropes, making sure to avoid stepping on them or getting tripped up. It's a game of timing and skill. Each role is critical to a good game. In my neighborhood, if you did not demonstrate that you were capable of turning the ropes with fairly consistent mastery, you were barred from the role.

I was a great turner. I had a rhythm that worked very well and could sync nicely with other turners in our neighborhood. But I wasn't a great jumper. Once I got in the rope I did a decent job, but I struggled to get in the rope in the first place. You have to assess the speed and rhythm of the ropes and how that relates to your own speed and style. If you miss and get hit with the ropes, it could be painful. Often I missed my moment due to my hyper-focus on the potential pain. More often than not, I couldn't get past the fear. At some point I decided that it was best if I just stayed in the role of turner, where I could be counted on. It saddens me now as I look back on it. I wish I'd had more courage to take the shot, to risk the temporary discomfort and trust that I would get the timing right.

John states that there is a wedding in Cana of Galilee. We aren't told who the couple is, but we are informed that Jesus' mother is an invited guest, as are Jesus and his disciples. At some point in the celebration Mary finds out that the wine, a central component of the celebration and an important part of the practice of hospitality,

has run out. We aren't told if she is asked to intervene or if she just decides to help on her own, but regardless of the reason, she tells her son—and the text implies an expectation on her part that he will do something to fix things.

But Jesus, Mary's beloved son, responds in a way that is a bit surprising. Instead of jumping up—or even simply bowing his head and praying the miracle into being—he asks her how the issue concerns him or her. Why does it matter to them? Clearly he knows about the importance of wine at a wedding. He knows about the potential embarrassment to the couple. And whether it seems like a big deal to him at that moment or not, he knows that it is a big deal to his mother. But along with asking Mary about how the need impacts him, he also tells her that his time for performing miracles has not yet come.

It is all about timing. I'm not sure what changes Jesus' mind, but he goes on to intervene. The wedding celebration is saved, his power is revealed, the disciples are encouraged, and their faith in him is strengthened.

Normally I read this text as a story about Jesus. And it is. But these times in our world find me viewing the story through the witness of Mary. I am struck by her need to intervene, and I wonder what moves her to do something. Is there a concern about the reputation of a family? Is there an interest in simply doing good because doing good is possible? Does she want to press her son to act on the strength of their relationship alone, or does she sense that he might want to be a part of this story's happy ending?

I don't know, but I am touched by her interest in intervention, especially in a season when so many are overcome by fatigue and overwhelmed by extreme needs that prevent additional room for any more caring. Though our bandwidth for grace and service is easily taxed, Mary reminds us that sometimes we get involved in the need right in front of us simply because we can.

But I am also struck by Mary's handling of timing: her own timing in making the request and her managing Jesus' sense of his timing in response. We don't know if she struggles with whether or not the moment is right, but for whatever reason she decides that her son's presence and the need make for perfect timing. The possible sting of his dismissal does not stop her from positioning herself—and the people she seeks to support—to receive an answer, just in case he comes through.

She reminds me that despite the weariness of these days, I can do the same. Mary jumps into the moment, moves through the temporary discomfort, and trusts that she has the timing right. I cannot say that after reading this I am going to look for a jump rope. But I can say that I am inspired to check the places in my life where a need, my presence, and my ability to help in some way meet together in rhythmic motion. I do not know if Jesus will answer in the ways that I hope he will, but whether or not he does, I can risk the sting of missing the mark and simply jump.