

I once knew a woman who thought she had breast cancer. Started out, she said, when a few symptoms appeared. But she dismissed these as fears and went about her life until the next symptoms appeared. She searched Dr. Google (searched the Web for medical information).

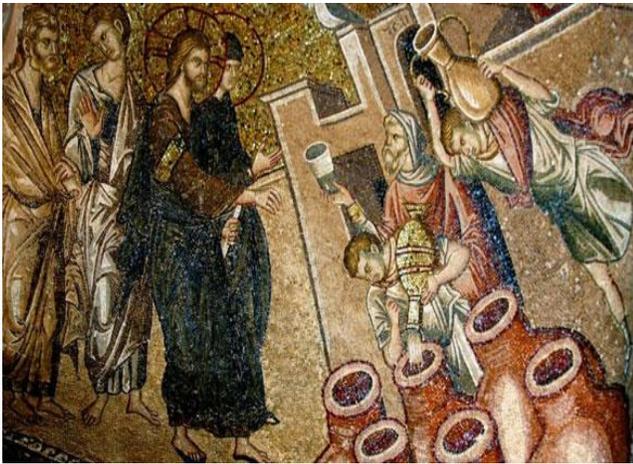
Soon, my friend Dora knew all the symptoms. By the time she mustered the courage to visit her doctor, she had just about all of the symptoms. And what burst from her mouth was, “I know I have breast cancer. I knew I should have come nine months ago.”

Dora, by the way, has graciously allowed me to share her story with you. Turns out, she didn’t have cancer.

I don’t think Dora’s different from any of us; do you? We fear death, so much so we sometimes let our fear immobilize us.

Jesus, on the other hand, didn’t seem to fear death. Jesus seemed intent on meeting his death head-on, just not before his time.

Jesus frequently said, “My hour has not yet come. Don’t tell anyone what I’ve just done here. Don’t tell anyone who I am. Not yet.” In John’s gospel on two occasions (7:30, 8:30) we learn that he avoided danger or capture by the authorities because “his hour had not yet come.”



Jesus told his own MOTHER at the wedding in Cana (2:4), “[Don’t tell ME we’re out of wine.] My hour has not yet come.” Then he caved and replenished the wine supply, performing the first miracle that we know about.

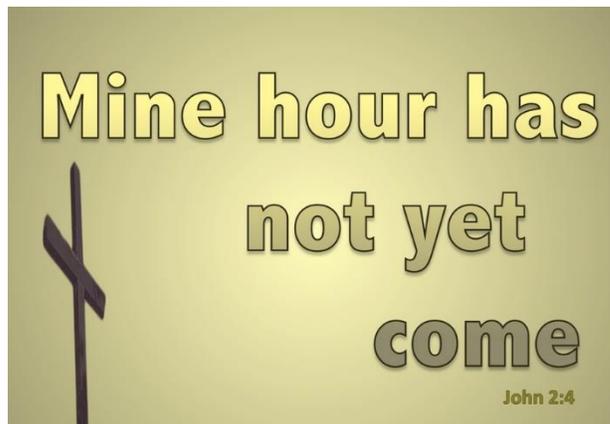
This sounds like the beginning of Jesus counting off the symptoms about his death:

- How close IS the death I must embrace?
- How near IS the death I must die?
- How close IS the act I came here to do to redeem the world?

Other theologians think the phrase, “My hour has not yet come” meant that time wasn’t yet exact according to God’s plan for Jesus to die. THIS theologian thinks the time wasn’t right because Jesus hadn’t yet fulfilled the messianic signs. THAT was the plan. If Jesus had been killed before he had

fulfilled scripture, he would have died in vain. We wouldn’t even know that God had come in the flesh as one of us.

Christ Jesus wasn’t here to turn water into wine. He was here to fulfill scripture, to let us know that the Kingdom of God had come near, to live and die as one of us and yet to provide a way for us to be with him forever. Here’s his amazing bucket list:



- He had to cure people, not just because healing was on the list, but as a measure of his love for us.
- There were lame to walk, blind who needed to see and deaf to hear, dead people to raise to demonstrate the coming concept, hungry people to feed, depressed people to fill with hope;
- Love and joy to share; and
- People who needed to renounce the powers of this world and be filled with the Bread of Heaven and the Cup of Salvation.

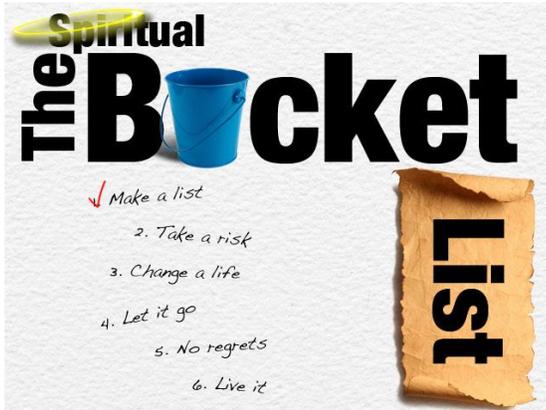
Jesus needed to show us that he is the Messiah, the Christ, but (more importantly) to show us how very much God cares for us. Every loving act was a cause of Jesus’ coming crucifixion, a fulfillment of scripture about the Messiah, AND a symptom of his “temporarily terminal illness.” The name of his “temporarily terminal illness” was his great love for us.

When we think about Jesus’ life in this way, the phrase “My hour has not yet come” takes on a whole new light.

Which brings me, at long last, to our gospel lesson for today. The last thing on Jesus’ bucket list must have been, “When the Gentiles know who I am and seek me out, when even the GREEKS believe in me, my hour will finally have come.”

The Greeks who sought out Jesus in our lesson today wanted an audience with him. Isn’t this what we ALL want of Jesus, to meet Jesus and ask things of him? What would YOU ask him? WE seek an audience with Jesus every day to ask him for things. Most of us have a whole long list of asks. Often, we ask for healing for ourselves or other. Nothing wrong with that; Jesus always heals people, although not

always in ways we recognize or prioritize. We want money if we have time and time if we have money. We want to end war, end hunger, and end poverty. We want our political party to win and our sports teams to prevail. We want control over our lives and over others. We want to know we are loved and understood, and we want other to know how special we are.



Sometimes, sometimes, we ask Jesus what he wants us to do, instead of the other way around. Then we point out why we can't or shouldn't, and who's more qualified to do the God-job being asked of us. Above all, we hope “our hour has not yet come.”

But today Jesus shows us the way. He suggests WE shouldn't seek out our death before we've done the job we exist to do. But, when our hour has come, Jesus tells us to embrace our death, to consider our lives seeds. What did our life accomplish for God? How will our death bring forth new possibilities, new life?

Jesus said his death was a seed that would bring the whole world to him (beginning, by implication, with the Greeks, the Gentiles, who sought him out in our lesson today). Jesus had fulfilled his life's purpose; the time had come to fulfill the purpose of his death.

For these last few years, we as Church of the Resurrection have been discerning whether “our time has come.” And the answer is “yes.” We, as Church of the Resurrection AS WE KNOW IT, have fulfilled our life's task. We have:

- Repented of our sins, of living for ourselves alone;
- Renounced the powers of this world that would turn us from God;
- Lived every day as a fellowship of Christ's disciples, loving God with our whole heart and (most days) loving our neighbors our ourselves; and
- Embraced our coming hour by asking God if we have fulfilled our purpose.

When Jesus had checked all the items on his bucket list, all HE asked about his death was that God be glorified. The heavens answered with divine seal of approval. Then Jesus became the ultimate seed by subjecting himself to death and rising victorious over death to live on in a new way to God's glory.

We, too, have been given this chance: to glorify God with our death. The life we as Church of the Resurrection have will be a great seed of new life and hope and joy for us and our whole church.

As individuals, I trust and pray that YOUR hour has not yet come. “Hold onto the handrail!” Which is to say, I want you here to be part of demonstrating our name, Resurrection, to those whose hope for our Church is waning.