

## The Glory & Authority of Jesus

John – 2:1-25

Key Verse: 11

*“This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.”*

In today's passage we find two very different events. First Jesus supplies wine at a wedding and then he tears up the temple. At first you may think that Jesus has gone crazy or maybe he had too much wine. And you might say to yourself, “This isn't the best way to start a ministry.” I would have to agree with you, because if you are going into a profession you don't want to tick off the people who are in charge of that line of work. But we are people and not God and this is how he chose to start his ministry.

Take a look at verses 1-2. “On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,<sup>2</sup> and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.” It was the first week of Jesus' ministry. On the third day after he left Judea, Jesus and his five new disciples were in Galilee. There was a wedding at Cana and Jesus' mother was already there. We're not sure why they are invited, maybe they was related to the bride or groom or just friends. Anyway Jesus and his disciples also had been invited. I'm sure the disciples were like everyone else and excited about the wedding, thinking about the good food and celebration they were going to enjoy. Weddings are fun, everyone gets dressed up and they are so happy, and it seems like there have been a lot of them in our ministry lately.

The Jews took weddings seriously. Unlike anything we are familiar with today. We may have a rehearsal dinner, a ceremony and a reception. But in their day, sometimes the weddings would last a whole week. Weddings are a special time where two families come together and the parents really want to bless their children. After the ceremony, many days of celebration continued. The bride and groom were dressed in robes and wedding crowns and treated like royalty. They stayed at home and had open house for a few days. Weddings were not for just the family but for the whole community. And in a country where life was tough and full of trouble, it was a bright spot in an otherwise hard life.

However at during this wedding a serious problem arose. In the midst of the feast the wine ran out. As you can imagine, wine was very important for the success of the wedding celebration. It was diluted wine so that everyone wouldn't get drunk still it put the wedding guests into a joyful mood and lifted the spirits of the occasion. And you know that offering good hospitality is very important, so it was embarrassing for the bride, groom and their parents when the wine ran out in the middle of their wedding. People would talk about it forever. But it was more than just that, according to Jewish custom, wine was the symbol of joy, celebration and blessing for the thought was that wine would flow abundantly during the Messianic age. So to run out would be considered as a sign of barrenness and maybe God's blessing was not on the new couple. So it was a pretty big deal.

Being a mother herself, Mary realized what's going on and she takes it upon herself to get involved. She went to Jesus and said, “They have no more wine.” Jesus replied, “Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.” (v3-4) Jesus' reply sounds a bit harsh, but it's the same words that Jesus used (Dear woman) when he spoke to her from the cross. (Jn 19:26) When Jesus said, “My time has not yet come,” he was referring to his death on the cross when he would be sacrificed as the Lamb of God. When Jesus responded like this, Mary could have been upset with her son's attitude. But she didn't get mad or complain, instead she did what she could do. She brought the problem to Jesus and entrusted it into his hands. Which is what we should do with all our problems-bring them to Jesus. Then she did her part. She quietly went to where the servants were and told them, “Do whatever he tells you.” (5) By doing this, she made an environment in which Jesus could do his work in his own way and in his own time.

The servants were more like slaves than waiters. They were responsible for all the work that had to be done. And they were especially busy during the wedding, imagine having to take care of the community for several days, not to mention maybe having to deal with a bridezilla. So when Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water," they could have complained, "Why? We're out of wine not water. And who are you to tell us what to do." They probably would not have dared to say such a thing but they could have thought it. I know I would. These jars contained water for the guests to ceremonially wash their hands. There were six of them and they held about 120 to 180 gallons of water: about the size of a city garbage can. They were pretty good size and heavy. And they didn't have a water faucet in their house they would have to go to the well down the block or outside the city. Where ever it was they would have to make a lot of trips so filling them wouldn't be easy. Without complaint the servants obeyed Jesus and filled the jars to the brim. "To the brim," reveals their attitude and shows that their obedience came from their willingness. Obedience is not blind submission. Obedience stems from willingness. Obedience is possible when we have Jesus in our hearts. They used to say don't buy cars made on Monday or Friday because the workers did their jobs half-heartedly. The sign of willingness is "filling the jars to the brim." And as children of God, this should be our attitude when we serve God. The servants obeyed from their heart, completely and finished the job. God doesn't always explain everything to us, that's ok, still we need willingness like these servants.

Look at verse 8. "Then he told them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.'" The servants obeyed Jesus when he gave them the task of filling the jars. But now Jesus was asking them to take water to the master of the banquet to taste. This task was even harder to obey. It was one thing to get the water, because that's just labor, but quite another to serve it to the guests when they were expecting wine. That might involve punishment. However when they were willing and obeyed, a miracle happened. The water turned into wine.

Look at verses 9-10. "...and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, 'Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.'" The guests really enjoyed the wine Jesus had made. The banquet master had no idea what had happened. He only knew the wine was better. On the other hand, the servants who obeyed Jesus and filled the jars to the brim knew what had happened: They experienced a miracle and saw firsthand the changing power of God. Think about that for a moment, a miracle just happened at a normal event and only a few people knew about it: Mary, the servants and the disciples. It makes you wonder, how many other miracles happen and only a few people know about it? In this passage, those who were working with Jesus got the special privilege to see a glimpse of God's power while the others who had their focus in the world missed out. Don't be one of those people who miss out on the miracles of God. "This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him." (v11) Jesus revealed his glory through this miracle. Jesus is God and he has control over nature. To those who believed in him, they could see his glory and they put their faith in him. What a wonderful privilege.

"After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days."<sup>13</sup> When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem." (v12-13) John puts this event at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, while the other three gospel writers place this event at the end. (Mt 21; Mk 11; Lk 19) John was more interested in teaching truth than in writing a chronological biography of Jesus. John saw that these two events revealed Jesus' grace and truth. (1:14) Making wine for the wedding reveals the grace of Jesus, and cleansing the temple reveals the truth of Jesus. He is the God of blessing, and at the same time he is the God of righteousness.

It was Passover time and this was a big deal. Passover is the largest celebration of the Jewish people. It is the day where all that are capable come into Jerusalem to the temple and they would come together as a

nation to celebrate what God had done for them when he freed them from their slavery in Egypt. What they would do in their homes before they would head to the temple is they would cleanse their home of leaven, of yeast. And throughout scripture, yeast and leavening agents are always symbolic and typified of sin. Sin causes us to be arrogant and proud and puff us up. And so they would cleanse their home of things that would cause leaven and cause things to rise and to puff up. And so their goal was to get all of the sin out of their home and all of the sin out of their lives and then come as pure worshippers to the temple to offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins, all typifying and showing what ultimately Jesus would do.

However when Jesus went into the temple courts, he saw many merchants selling animals for sacrifices while others were busy exchanging money. This is a tremendous problem. Jesus walks into the temple and it's like an out of control flea market. There are animals making noise, the sound of coins being exchanged as there are a lot of negotiations going back and forth. Traditionally when we look at this scene we want to criticize the people who run the temple because it is terrible when religion becomes corrupted and goes after money. That is true, but it's not quite that simple. Another problem here that we fail to realize is lazy worshippers. We would rather put the blame on the temple because we are part of the worshippers. In the Book of Deuteronomy they were told that they were supposed to bring their sacrifices to God for their celebration. The animals here are the animals that God had designated to be offered as sacrifices. But according to scripture, people were supposed to raise their own sacrifice and supposed to transport their own sacrifice. And in failing to do that, in their laziness, they have caused a need to arise for a business to do what they were supposed to do in the first place.

The way that God designed it was so that this sacrifice actually cost you something, you had to sacrifice and an animal that you raised from birth would lose it's life, it would be a truly grievous moment. So that you could see with your own eyes the tremendous cost of your sin in the hopes that you would repent and turn from your sin. The whole idea of the annual sacrifice is that it was supposed to be convenient. And what happened over time is that the people became lazy and thought, "Well, that's complicated. That's difficult. That's burdensome, cumbersome. We can find a better way to do this. What we will do, we will just show up there with money in our pockets, and then we know that there'll be someone around there that will sell us what we need. And then we can go in and have the great high priest sacrifice the animal. And then the blood can be shed to show what needs to happen for our sins to be forgiven, ultimately what the Messiah, what Jesus will do." And so what happens then is lazy worshippers who aren't doing their responsibility of raising their sacrifices, transporting them and obeying what God has said are still trying to worship through a shortcut. They want to pay someone else to do what they were supposed to do. And they became lazy, wanting to worship God without working. They wanted convenience. This is the hallmark of our modern age.

Another problem that resulted because business has now come in to meet a need that worshippers were supposed to do was increased cost. Leon Barclay, one of the commentators, says that the "Cost of a dove on the temple grounds was as much as 20 times its actual value." Can you believe that? And that was the sacrifice for the poor. So the poor and oppressed were robbed of an opportunity to really worship God because they couldn't afford it. Not only that all the animals had to be inspected to make sure they were without blemish but again corruption had set in and the guy inspects it and says, "No, that one won't do, but we have some nice ones for sale over here."

Naturally when Jesus saw this he becomes angry. Jesus was fuming. He made a whip out of cords and he wreaks havoc in the temple driving them and their animals out. He flips over the money changers' tables. He said to the dove sellers, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" Why is Jesus so different here compared to how he was at the wedding? The reason is in verse 16. He was angry because the Jewish leaders had made the house of God into a market. The temple was the house of God, where the glory of the Lord came down and dwelled. (2Ch 5, 7; Ex 25) It was supposed to be the

place where God met with his people. (Ex 25:8) The temple was the place where the word of God was. The temple was the center of Israel's spiritual life and community as well. A Psalmist living in exile wrote of the temple, "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." (Ps 84:10) However the religious leaders in Jesus' day had exchanged God for money and the worshippers became lazy worshipping out of their convenience. All had become sick with sin. So Jesus drove them out of the temple. This was not easy for him to do, but Jesus, the God of truth, truly wanted to help them so he made a whip and drove them out of the temple risking his own life to give them a chance to repent before God.

Of course the Jews responded negatively and demanded that Jesus perform a sign to prove his authority to do such a revolutionary act. What did Jesus say to them? Verse 19 says, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." In this verse, Jesus declares that he is the temple. People will no longer need a visible temple in order to worship God. The old temple was man made, but Jesus is God's temple. People can meet God and solve their sin problem in Jesus. The visible temple would no longer be the center of the life of God's people; Jesus is the center of their lives. In Jesus we have salvation. Jesus also taught them through verse 19 the hidden secret of God's great salvation. The Son of God must die on the cross and rise on the third day. This is the good news of great joy for all people, for Jesus' death and resurrection solves all men's sin problems and give them a living hope in the kingdom of God.

So what does this passage have to do with us? Two things. First, if you do not believe in Jesus he want to show you through this passage that Jesus is God and he has amazing power and wants to bless your life. He wants to bless you by chaning your from ordinary water into the best wine. To redeem a common item and make it valuable.

When we trust and obey his word, Jesus changes each of us as he changed Simon to Peter. In chapter 1 Jesus renamed Simon to Peter but over time he would really be changed within his heart. Through this first miraculous sign Jesus proved that he came to this world to change people into new creations. Jesus revealed his transforming power when he changed water into wine. No one can change another person. We can't even change ourselves, even if we really want to. But Jesus can change us. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" This is the testimony of Paul, who when he lived according to his passion and pride, he harmed others. But when he met the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus, he was changed from the enemy of God to his child.

And the second thing is for those of us who believe in Jesus. (we have to fall into one of these categories) Let me ask you this question, what have you come here with today? What did you bring to worship? Do you actively participate in worship to our Lord and Savior or have you become a victim of convenience? For us, Jesus came to cleanse our temple. Our temple is our body, specifically our heart. Jesus comes to clean our hearts of all the dirty things they have accumulated there. Jesus is the only one who can do that. He is the only one who has authority and power to do it. Jesus is the Almighty creator God. The servants' obedience is a glimpse of our Lord's own obedience. Our Lord Jesus came into this world to show people how to obey the will of God. He was God, but he became the Lamb of God and paid the price as our ransom sacrifice? As Adam's disobedience brought curse upon mankind, so Jesus' obedience brings salvation. Hebrews 5:8 says, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered...." People don't naturally obey. Just look at any child. From day one they learn to disobey. Therefore we must learn how to obey the will of God from Jesus' example. May Jesus, the God of grace and truth fill your hearts.