

Water in to Wine Sermon

Good Morning, today I want to look John 2 and the story of the Jesus' first miracle. This passage is a lot like a parable because it may look quite simple on the surface but it is has many different dimension and layers that tells us about Jesus, his kingdom and his mission.

The Wedding at Cana

The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. ³ The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." ⁴ "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." ⁵ But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, ⁸ he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions. ⁹ When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. ¹⁰ "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!" ¹¹ This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him. ¹² After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples. John 2:1-12 NLT

Jewish weddings in the time of Jesus were not like weddings today and were not an event that took place in one day. Jewish weddings celebrations lasted for between five and seven days. During those days of celebration guests would eat and drink large quantities of food and wine and there would also be music and dancing.

I find this passage interesting because Jesus finds himself in a small town called Cana just outside of Galilee at a wedding with his family and his disciples. Jesus is not going to the wedding to perform a miracle but because he and his family had been invited – Jesus was just a wedding guest. Also most commentators refer to this as Jesus' first public miracle but it's not really public because the only people who knew what Jesus did was his mother Mary, the servants who did what Jesus said and his disciples and family who were near to him.

This passage in a sense is the culmination of everything that has happened previously in chapter one. In Chapter 1 the writer John explores how Jesus is revealed by the father as the very manifestation of God. Ch 1: 17 'but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.' This is then followed by Jesus' Baptism and then Jesus chooses and reveals himself to his first disciples. Next you have Jesus performing this first miracle, this first sign that reveals his glory. So you end up with succession of events that lead Jesus into his mission / ministry that establishes some of the terms of that mission through these events:

- **Jesus' Baptism** (a life devoted to the father work)
- **Jesus Revealing himself to his disciples** (calling others to follow him in his mission)
- **Jesus reveals his glory by turning water into wine** (transformation – transforming nature of Jesus' mission and message..)
- **Clears and cleanses the temple** (cleansing and purification)

So let's take a more detailed look at this passage:

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As I said earlier Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding, whilst Mary seemed to have some kind of catering role in the wedding. Mary comes to Jesus and said there is no wine, in other words they have run out of wine and as Jewish wedding celebration could last up to seven days you can understand that there is the possibility that the wine could run particularly if it was a large wedding. The wine running out would have been a disaster for the groom's family because not only would it had been embarrassing and reflected poorly on them but according to some historians lawsuits were not uncommon in these situations.

When Mary tells Jesus that there is no more wine he tells her that it is not their problem and his time had not come yet. Jesus was not prepared to act as far he was concerned it was not their problem and his time had not come to perform a miracle of any kind. But Jesus' hesitation doesn't hinder Mary and she tells servants to do as he says. This is interesting because Jesus is doesn't want to get involved, he doesn't want act – it's not his problem or his time so why should he do anything? Mary on other hand is worried about Jesus response she has this kind of faith that believes Jesus will provide the wine and trusts he will do it. It's almost like her faith, belief and trust in him that causes him to act and change his mind and tell the servants what to do even though it's not his time or his problem.

This kind faith and belief in Jesus is recorded in Mark 7:24-28 with the gentile woman whose daughter was possessed. She begs Jesus to set her daughter free and again Jesus is reluctant to help her and says he was sent to his people to feed and help and states that it is not right to take Israel's food and give it to the dogs. She replies with faith, belief and trusts and says that even the dogs need to eat scraps. Again it's her faith in Jesus that causes him to act even though he was sent to Jews and not to the gentiles. In Matthew 17:20 Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible. (NLT) This was the kind of faith that both the gentile woman and Mary had – faith that caused Jesus to act in circumstances he was reluctant to.

This is Kingdom Faith! – Faith at work for the kingdom in a place or situation where for some reason or the other it shouldn't. Mary had the faith that Jesus was going to provide, he was going to act and instead allowing that situation to bring shame to that family and cause hurt to the couple and the family – she believes instead that Jesus will provide where there is isn't enough and cause to brought to the family honour instead of shame! This type of faith is not like piety or religious faith – it doesn't hurt or bring shame or seek to embarrass and humiliate others but instead this type of faith brings help, hope and honour and love to situation.

What kind of faith is life characterised by? When presented with crisis do you believe in the good, are you hopeful and bring love? Or do you seek to bring shame, embarrassment and humiliation to the person/situation?

⁶Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus told the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” When the jars had been filled, ⁸he said, “Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies.” So the servants followed his instructions. ⁹When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. ¹⁰“A host always serves the best wine first,” he said. “Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!” John 2:6-10 NLT ¹¹This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him. ¹²After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

Jesus instructs the servants to fill the six ceremonial Jars with water. These vases were used before meals for people to wash their hands as Jewish law required people to wash their hands before a meal and these vases were likely to be made of earthenware because they were less likely to contract uncleanness. In Jesus’ time according to Jewish law and tradition to eat with unwashed hands would have been to defile the person / to make them unclean.

These earthen vases were not likely to be the storage place of wine! But Jesus uses the same pots that were used to cleanse people’s hands to fill with water that he turn to wine to serve to the guests. The water that went into these pots was water for washing – imagine Jesus turning asking them to fill these vases with water – tip some out and then it would be changed and transformed into wine. Also what is interesting is that each of the ceremonial vases held between 20 and 30 gallons of water, so in total there must have been between 120-180 Gallons of wine – Now I am not expert on what kind total in litres there would be – But I think it’s fair to say that Jesus provided more than enough wine for the wedding – Jesus didn’t provide the bare minimum but he went above and beyond that provision that was necessary.

Also it’s interesting to note the response of the master of ceremonies to the tasting of the wine: ‘A host always serves the best wine first,’ he said. “Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!” When you go to a wedding or any kind of party the host usually serves the best wine first in order to impress the guest and leaves the cheap wine for the end of an evening when most people will be too drunk to know the difference. The master of ceremonies was amazed that the best wine was saved to that point.

Now before go a bit further to look at what this passage tells about Jesus, his kingdom and his mission and how that inform our mission as agents of that kingdom; in verse 12 describes this event as a ‘[This miraculous sign.](#)’ In Matthew, Mark and Luke the Greek word for miracle is ‘*dynameis*’ which refer to miracle as act of power and in the first three gospels miracle are acts and demonstrations of God’s power

Whereas in the John Jesus’ miracles are referred to as signs – the Greek word used is ‘*Semeia.*’ In John and in this miracle we see more than just a demonstration of God’s power but a sign that is symbolic and that point beyond themselves to Jesus and his significance. In this case the miracle is a sign that reveals and symbolizes God’s Glory to those who believe and as one commentator stated ‘confront others with the need to decide about Jesus.’¹ . [And his disciples believed in him. V11](#)

¹Milne, Bruce: *The Message of John : Here Is Your King! :with Study Guide.* Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill. : Inter-Varsity Press, 1993 (The Bible Speaks Today), S. 62

So what does this passage about the wedding of Cana tell about the kingdom and what Jesus' mission was characterized by and what our mission should be characterized by:

a) The 'new wine' of the kingdom brought by Jesus contrasts with the old wine of Judaism.

For us The New wine of the Kingdom contrast with the old wine of religion

- New -
- Faith is characterized by Love, hope and honour
- Kingdom with no limits to its provision (people or situation)
- Kingdom not limited by tradition and law
- Inclusive
- Refreshing, thirst quenching – in a world that tires and exhausts
- Is not heavy – my yoke is easy and burden is light Matthew 11:28-30
- Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."
- Causes others believe

b) An expression of the transformation that Jesus Brings

This passage symbolizes the transformation power and work of Jesus in a person wine. Jesus changed water into wine. He took something ordinary and transformed into that was of the best quality. Jesus did this throughout the NT he took some ordinary disciples and transformed their lives and they went on to transform the lives of those around them and their world. When Jesus came into contact with people he:

- Sickness was transformed into health
- Death was transformed into life
- Sin was transformed grace
- Fear was transformed into faith
- Despair was transformed into hope

We too need to live transformed lives that are transformed by following the way of Jesus and by through the power and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives imagine the impact of the difference a life where hatred is transformed into love, fear is transformed into faith, despair is transformed into hope, guilt and shame is transformed into hope and honour, something negative can be transformed into something positive.

As I am closing I think it's interesting that everyone there was given the water that was turned into wine to drink – but the only ones who know and believed disciples – maybe this is telling us that that this new wine, of the kingdom can be given to all even though they all may not believe. Maybe this transformational work Jesus does to those who do believe is for everyone????? – few thoughts