

- I. The first of many signs and wonders
- A. John 2:1-12 . . . On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; [2] and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. [3] When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." [4] And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come." [5] His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." [6] Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. [7] Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." So they filled them up to the brim. [8] And He said to them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it to him. [9] When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, [10] and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." [11] This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. [12] After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.
- B. Review: Just as a reminder, beginning in John 1:19 - 11:45, John uses a number of stories to show us that Jesus is both human and divine – that He is Immanuel. So far, we have worked our way through the four stories in the first chapter, and back in November, we started this story in the second chapter. And as you may recall, while looking at vs 1-6,
1. I pointed out that as Christians, our most precious family is the family made up of those who do the will of God.
 2. We then looked at the fact that our first responsibility is to God. From that priority, we move on down the ladder to those to whom we owe a lesser measure of responsibility.
 3. I reminded you that it is wise to study God's word in order to learn what is acceptable to ask God for. But once we are confident our requests are within the boundaries of what God deems acceptable, we ought to ask with the confidence that God will hear and answer.

4. Then we talked about rightly valuing religious rituals and traditions, and yet, we are to always remember that our rituals and traditions will be empty and worthless unless we pursue godliness in all of life.
5. The last thing we looked at was Jesus' response to His mother's request that He solve the "out of wine" problem, and in looking at that I pointed out that in performing His first sign, Jesus started down His path to the cross.
6. And though I did not speak of this in our first look at this story, the path to the cross that Jesus set in motion included such things as taking to a public life that cost Him his privacy and resulted in His being followed, jostled, watched, challenged, and misunderstood. It included having to pray while others slept, being tested with trick questions, being sought for His miracles instead of the truth He taught, having His teaching and claims taken out of context and used against Him, being despised, falsely accused, and ultimately unjustly condemned to death on a cross. Maybe this is why Jesus did not jump at the chance to perform His first sign.

C. Pray

II. Changing water to wine – Part 2

- A. John 2:7 . . . Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water (which in total held an estimated 120-180 gallons of water)." So they filled them up to the brim (which means no more or nothing else could be put in).
 1. To run out of wine at a Jewish wedding WOULD be an embarrassment for the groom and his family.
 - a. In the same way, to run out of the joy of the Lord, or to come up short on faith in the goodness of God, or to lose confidence that God works all things out for good, or to lack contentment with what God is doing or allowing,
 - b. or to run out of the peace of God that stills the heart and mind regardless of the circumstances, or lose your zeal for God's honor, or to run out of a driving hunger and thirst for righteousness, or to stop intentionally pursuing godliness in yourself and in the church OUGHT to be an embarrassment for Christians today.
 2. However, though we may not be as spiritually full as we ought to be, and though we may not have within ourselves or within the church all that needs to be there, we have Jesus, who is both able and willing to fill us full of what we need and transform us into what we ought to be so that what comes out of us is what our family, our church, our community, our work place, and the world around us needs.

B. Three times in this gospel, John directly states a specific way in which Jesus fills us up.

1. First, Jesus fills us full of joy

a. John 15:9-11 . . . Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. [10] If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. [11] These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

b. John 16:23-24 . . . In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. [24] Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

2. Second, Jesus fills us full of the abundant life. John 10:9-10 . . . I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. [10] The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

3. Third, Jesus fills us full of the Holy Spirit. John 3:33-34 . . . He who has received [Christ's] testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. For He (Jesus Christ) whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He (Jesus Christ) gives the Spirit without measure.

4. We can be full of all that Jesus gives, but we will only be as full as we want to be – for the fullness that we want is the degree to which we will put off whatever is of our old nature and the world that is getting in the way of being filled with what Jesus wants to fill us with.

C. John 2:8-10 . . . And [Jesus] said to them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it to him. [9] When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, [10] and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now."

1. There are five lessons in these 3 verses that I want to out.

2. First Lesson: Not everyone recognizes a miracle when it has taken place. Some are oblivious because their attention is on other things. Some simply don't believe in miracles, and so they explain miraculous happenings in other ways. However, there are those who both believe

and are attentive enough to see miracles when they happen. My reason for pointing this out is the fact that, based on time and distance, we won't see every miracle God performs. However, let us not miss seeing the ones we ask for. And let us not miss seeing the ones that take place near enough to be able to discern that a miracle has taken place.

3. Second Lesson: The servants knew they put water in the jars.
 - a. This means that when Jesus told them to give some to the headwaiter, they also knew that if it was still water, there would be some explaining to do.
 - b. And yet, rather than refusing to obey out of fear it might result in them looking like fools or getting into trouble, they submitted to Jesus and did as He said.
 - c. I see this as an example of the faith we Christians are to have in Jesus. Though we don't always know what the outcome will be, faith obeys what Jesus commands – with the full and confident expectation that He will ensure a good outcome.
4. Third Lesson: To those who were there, it looked like the servants were doing all the work, and yet it was the unseen work of Jesus that turned the water to wine.
 - a. In this same way, it may seem like we are doing all the work – and without question, we ought to be doing the work that Jesus has given us to do, which includes the work of putting off the old nature and putting on the likeness of Christ, denying self and taking up our cross daily, serving, giving, showing mercy, encouraging, and the work of evangelism.
 - b. And yet, all unseen to our eyes and the eyes of those watching is the work of Jesus which takes what we are doing and uses it to further transform us, and to bless those we touch in ways we could never bless on our own.
 - c. In other words, though we are commanded to do certain things, whatever good comes out of our doing, is in the end, God's doing – for He is the one who uses yielded servants to accomplish His purposes in the servants themselves, and in the world.
5. Fourth Lesson, It is commonly believed in the world, and sadly, even in the church, that the best comes first and that which is worse comes last. For example –
 - a. In the early years of life we have a youthful body that looks good, that is strong, and is able to perform many tasks and accomplish many physical feats. But then comes old age with its wrinkles,

physical weakness, loss of flexibility, and the loss of the ability to do things we once did. . . and it is common for us to deem the first better and the latter worse.

- b. When we fall in love, and follow that with marriage, the first year or so seems wonderful – like a dream come true. But as life goes on, many find that love wanes, the wonderful feelings diminish, the excitement decreases, and boredom, discontentment, disagreement, and conflict set in – which reinforces the belief that what comes first is wonderful while what comes after is tedious, unsatisfying, something to be endured, and therefore worse.
- c. There are older Christians who view their Christian experience in this same way. To them, the best came first and what came after wasn't all that good.
 - (1) For example, they began their Christian life with a zeal for godliness, joy, simple faith, and bold evangelism. But as the years passed, distrust of God, discontentment, and a degree of cynicism set in over life's challenges, trials, and troubles. They became spiritually complacent so that further growth in godliness happened rarely and unintentionally.
 - (2) And if not them, themselves, then surely the younger Christians who observe them can easily believe that the best comes first and what comes later on is worse.
- d. But this is not what God intends for us.
 - (1) Our bodies deteriorate by God choosing – which is for the good of everyone because it limits the growth of sin by limiting the length of a sinner's life. And bodily deterioration reinforces the truth that life on earth is temporary and therefore we are wise to give serious attention to preparing for life hereafter.
 - (2) God's intention for marriage is that we would progressively realize and kill off selfishness so that we mature in our love for one another. In other words, His intention for marriage in this sin-filled world is that the end is far better and more satisfying than the beginning.
 - (3) And the reality is, the Christian life ought to begin with zeal and joy – though it includes what can seem like endless trials, an onslaught of temptations, and the painful challenges of dying to self and growing toward spiritual maturity. However, if we faithfully travel God's narrow path, it will lead to a life that Jesus describes as abundant – and

Christians who have traveled this far describe the abundant life as indescribably fulfilling and satisfying – regardless of the outward circumstances.

6. Fifth Lesson: When comparing the life the devil offers to the life God offers, the best comes first with the devil and the worst comes first with God. But what is first is NOT the end of the story, for the worst comes last with the devil and the best comes last with God.
 - a. For example, the devil promises and gives us the best first, right at the start. He gives fame, riches, pleasures, and power. He makes selfishness look wise and self-centeredness rewarding.
 - (1) And yet, in the end there is always suffering, irretrievable loss, destruction, damaged or broken relationships, and ultimately death (Proverbs 9:13-18; 20:17).
 - (2) In other words, the devil gives dessert first, but all his desserts are inseparably tied together with the bitterest of consequences.
 - b. In contrast to the devil's way, God's way begins with the hard and often humbling work of facing the truth about the extent of our selfishness, sinfulness, and lack of faith.
 - (1) Next, God's way requires the hard work of dying to self and putting off the old nature with its evil habits, beliefs, values, and desires, and putting on the new self which is made in the image of Christ. And as if all these things are not hard enough, perseverance, that is, not giving up, is required to make life-changing progress.
 - (2) But those who persevere in this process of change, will in time, come into the abundant life of inner peace and joy – regardless of the circumstances. They will gain a confident faith in the goodness of God, and an enjoyment of the presence of God that makes it seem as if they are in a heavenly world regardless of what happens here on earth.
 - (3) Therefore, God's way, however hard it begins, grows and improves and progresses so that the best comes last. Therefore, when we are willing to suffer first, what follows is increasingly superior to what precedes it – until we have what is best of all.
7. May we, as God's people, see through the devil's lies and cling to God's truth about which way leads to life – though hard at first, and which way leads to death – though exceeding pleasurable and self-satisfying at first.

- D. John 2:11 . . . This beginning of His signs (attesting miracles) Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.
1. Though signs are intended to reveal the glory of God and His presence on the earth, seeing signs and wonders doesn't automatically result in saving faith in God, or life transforming faith.
 - a. Peter affirmed this in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, when he said to the crowd that Jesus was a man attested to them by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in their midst. And yet they handed Him over to Pilot, had Him nailed to a cross, and put Him to death (Acts 2:22-23).
 - b. They saw the signs, yet they refused to believe. May we be spiritually wise enough to use the signs to build and strengthen our faith.
 2. Not all signs and wonders are God's doing.
 - a. Jesus stated this in Matthew 24:23-25, "If anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. [24] For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. [25] Behold, I have told you (warned you) in advance.
 - b. There may always be deceivers among God's people who manufacture signs and wonders to draw a crowd in order to gain fame and wealth. We ought to be spiritually astute enough to both spot the deception and recognize the real thing.

III. Conclusion

- A. This single story of Jesus turning the water to wine provides many lessons, that when pondered and applied, are exceeding useful for living the Christ-like life. I encourage you to review, ponder, and consider how you can apply these lessons to your life in the days and weeks ahead.