

THE FIRST SIGN

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19 February 2023

Key verses: John 2:1-11

INTRODUCTION

We are in week three of going through the Book of John. I'll be sharing from the first part of John 2. This is when Jesus, Mary and the disciples attend a wedding celebration in Cana and where we see Jesus' first miracle.

John actually refers to the miracles as "signs".

He does this deliberately because signs point to something or someone and the signs here are all pointing to Jesus; they reveal His glory, His power and who He is. Because we know that Jesus isn't just claiming by words to be the Son of God, He demonstrates it. That's what I love about Jesus - He modelled a way of life and we see that in this story.

So Jesus actually attends a wedding celebration in Galilee. In those days, weddings were significant events, they were actually the most significant local celebrations that people experienced all year; these weddings were actually the go-to symbol of joy and community.

John 2:1-11 NIV

¹*On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."*

⁴*"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."*

⁵*His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."*

⁶*Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.*

⁷*Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.*

⁸*Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."*

They did so,⁹ 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 aside¹⁰ 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."

¹¹*What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

Two Main Points:

1. The significance of Jesus' miracle.
2. The participation of the servants.

1. The significance of Jesus' miracle.

- i. The wine represents new life in Jesus. Not only did Jesus produce new wine, He produces the best wine and this talks about our eternal life in Jesus. That which Jesus offers us is the best - that when we come to Him we become new, a new creation.
- ii. This change can only happen through Jesus just like we see in this story. Jesus is the one who brings the new wine; He brings the change in our lives. So often we try our best to change our behaviour, we try to produce our own wine, we try to produce holiness by correcting our behaviour and then we find ourselves stuck, not realising that it's only in Him – it's only in Jesus that we are able to have new wine. This is where we see His glory revealed because He came to earth for a purpose and that was to restore us to the Father and offer us new life in Him.
- iii. We read in this passage that Jesus asks the servants to fill the jars with water. These jars were between 20 to 30 gallons which is between 75 litres and 113 litres. We see here that Jesus doesn't just produce the best wine, but he also produces an abundance of wine.

What does this mean?

Jesus offers us an abundance of peace, an abundance of joy and love, a love that never runs out and never fails; **there's** even an abundance of forgiveness through His sacrifice. He exceeds our expectations and **there's** no limit to God's love in our lives.

In fact, I am learning more and more about God everyday, just loving Him deeply... I find myself reading the same Scripture and verses in the Bible and yet finding new revelation and wisdom in the same verses, because God gives in abundance.

If you look at the setting of this story; it's a wedding celebration where there's community, love and joy and Jesus is a part of that celebration and His presence there produces more joy in the hearts of those people, because without Him, the celebration would have died out. He is the source of our joy, our peace; it is not in our circumstances or situations, it's in Him. I love that Jesus, our King, our Saviour was in a little town loving and serving His people. Joy and peace is our inheritance.

2. The participation of the servants.

One of the things that really stuck out for me was the participation of the servants. In this miracle or sign we actually see that the servants played a part.

Mary approaches Jesus and says "We have no wine"

Mary then **turns to the servants and says "Do whatever he tells you"**

Because she knows who Jesus is, she knows that He is capable of sorting this problem out.

Jesus tells the servants **"Fill the jars with water"** and so they filled them and then He told them to draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.

Jesus instructed them and they obeyed. You see they cannot create the wine but they can fill something with water, Jesus asks the servants to participate, He could have easily done it Himself but He wanted them to participate because Jesus also reveals Himself through people.

And this is a picture of how the experience of new wine or new life in Jesus actually works out in practice: we start to participate in what Jesus wants us to do, like loving and serving people,

praying for miracles, trusting God to help us in our everyday needs. Sometimes we have to do something as ordinary as filling a jar with water so that Jesus can create that new wine but note that it's He that creates the wine, not us, our job is to fill the water, our job is to obey HIM.

We have to learn to do "Whatever He tell us to do"

To be a disciple we have to obey the Lord and His instructions.

How do we do that?

We keep His commands, we do whatever He tells us, we search the Scriptures, we spend much time in prayer, we join a Jesus loving community and we seek the Lord always. **It's** through Jesus that we are able to do everything that He asks of us.

Obedience can be scary because it requires us to get out of our comfort zones. God will sometimes instruct us to go pray healing over someone, maybe He will ask you to encourage a stranger or to quit your job and move cities, maybe He wants you to help someone financially and you yourself have little money.

All of this stuff can be scary if we **don't** know the One who instructs us. Knowing Jesus personally produces trust in Him - our faith and confidence is in Him. The new life in Jesus or the new wine gives us the boldness, the revelation, the love for His people and because of our love for Christ we will do His will.

When we begin to trust the Lord, we begin to value His instructions and when we value His instructions we begin to honour Him with our decisions.

Obedience becomes easy when we know Jesus.

Personal testimony: Obeying the instruction to go to the Gap year.

CONCLUSION

I believe that Jesus came to die on a cross to restore us back to the Father, but He also came to model a way of life and that was to be totally dependant on God, to be led by the Father and to do whatever He tell us, just like Mary told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them. And as Scripture says, when we see Jesus we see the Father.

In Jesus there is new life: abundance of joy and peace: living life together in community: loving God and one another and obeying Him.

Let's be like Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does this first sign (miracle) reveal to you about Jesus?
2. Has Jesus given you an "instruction", and how are you responding to it? (*The servants in the story were given an instruction to do something 'ordinary': fill jars with water*)
3. Are you following Jesus' example, living the life He modelled and taught us about?