

“Turning Water Into Wine”

John 2:1-12

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January 10, 2021

Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding the first miracle of Jesus as He turned water into wine. To recognize the significance of wine to the Jewish wedding ceremony and to understanding that Jesus is the Church’s (or Bride’s) True Groom. To realize how, in this case, water pictured the emptiness of Old Covenant ceremonial law while wine pointed to the fullness of joy found in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ. To recognize, the seven signs in John’s gospel were part of announcing to the Jewish people that their long-awaited Messiah had arrived.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Jesus and His disciples attend a Jewish wedding in Cana (John 2:1-3)

1. **Chapter 2** begins with the words *“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.”* In light of the conclusion of **chapter 1**, what event did this third day come after (**vs. 1**)? How far was it to travel from the area John the Baptist was baptizing at on the Jordan River to Galilee? How long would it take Jesus and His disciples to walk there? Why do you think the Jews would not take the shortest way through Samaria?
2. At the end of **chapter 1**, Jesus called His first disciples: Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel, and most people believe the Apostle John. In **John 1:43**, the Bible says: *“The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”* Why do you think Jesus wanted to head north to Galilee (**vv. 1-2**)? Do you find it significant that Mary is mentioned in **verse 1**? If so, why? What was her connection to the wedding? Jesus had just called His disciples into ministry; how did they get invited so quickly?
3. The Jewish wedding was a big event and lasted for an entire week; wine was a key part of the celebration. What crisis developed in **verse 3**? Who came to Jesus for help? Do you think Mary was asking Jesus to perform a miracle or was she simply asking Him to help find some wine for the embarrassed couple? Note: If drinking a cup of wine was sin, this was the perfect opportunity for Jesus to say so. He not only did not use this opportunity to condemn the drinking of wine, He created approximately 180 gallons to keep the celebration going.

Part II: The newlyweds run out of wine and are in need of assistance (John 2:4-10)

1. Jesus responded to His mother's request by calling her "*Woman*" (vs. 4). On the surface, this seems rather harsh and rude, but it was not. Jesus used this same Greek word in **John 4:21** & **19:26**. What was the context in each? Note: The use of this word is very similar to calling a woman politely "*ma'am*." In what way does The New Living Translation capture the meaning of this word in **John 2:4**?
2. What did Jesus mean when said "*My hour has not yet come*" (vs. 4)? When Jesus used the phrase "*My hour*," what was He generally referring to? (See **John 7:28-30; 12:23-24; 17:1**)
3. Jesus did not say, "*No*," to His mother, but He made clear that He was on His Heavenly Father's timetable and not hers. What was Mary's response to the comeback of Jesus in **verse 4 (vs. 5)**? Do you think Mary expected Jesus to do a miracle on the spot or was she simply asking her Son to help the newlyweds find some more wine to share?
4. In **verse 5**, Mary said to the servants, "*Whatever He says to you, do it?*" Why do you think so many believers today want to tell Jesus what to do instead of waiting on Him? Many people treat Jesus like some sort of a cosmic bellhop, should they? How should we treat Jesus?
5. For years Mary must have thought about the words of the Angel Gabriel. (See **Luke 1:30-33**) What kind of expectations do you think Mary had for Jesus at this moment? Mary spoke wisely. Isn't this the way we should live our lives today: "*Whatever He says to you, do it?*" What are some ways that we can know what the Lord is saying to us today?
6. **Verse 6** speaks of six stone waterpots and it appears that they may have been empty. These waterpots were used for ceremonial washings according to the law of Moses. What can we learn symbolically about the law of God if indeed these pots were empty? How much water did each of these containers hold?

7. What command did Jesus give to the servants in **verse 7**? Why was it significant that the servants did this act and not the disciples of Jesus? Why is it important for Christians who desire the Lord to work to be out there serving? What command is given to the servants in **verse 8**? Did the servants ask the Lord, “*Why?*” How did they respond?

8. What was the master of the feast’s response when he was served the new wine which had just arrived (**vv. 9-10**)? Did he have any idea where it had come from? How do you think he would have responded if he knew it was from the stone waterpots? Note: Jesus had created approximately 180 gallons of the world’s best wine, ever. What did the master of the feast mean by his response in **verse 10**? Why would this be done at most weddings?

9. What, if any difference, is there between “*joy*” and “*happiness*”? What are some ways that coming to Christ has brought joy to your heart? When are you happy? When are you joyful? What truth can every believer learn from **2 Cor. 5:17**?

10. According to **verse 11**, this was the “*beginning of signs Jesus did.*” The Bible specifically says this was the first miracle that Jesus performed. How should Christians respond when they hear stories from such false works as “*The Infancy Gospel of Thomas*” which claim Jesus did supposed miracles during His childhood? What should every claim be tested against?

11. Today, signs point towards something greater. The Gospel of John identifies seven signs (or miracles) performed by Jesus. What were they? (See **John 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-15; 6:5-13; 6:16-21; 9:1-7; 11:1-44**) According to **verse 11b**, what happened as a result of this first sign? The New Testament lists 35 miracles performed by Jesus. What was the purpose of these miracles?

Part III: The beginning of signs and the journey to Capernaum (John 2:11-12)

1. After leaving Cana, where did Jesus, his mother, brothers and disciples travel too (**vs. 12**)? Where was this city located and why does the Bible describe the party as going “*down*” to it? What did this city eventually become for Jesus and His disciples? Note: The trip to Cana had been a family affair for Mary indicating the newlyweds may have been family or close friends. It wouldn’t be long, and these same brothers of Jesus would be mocking Him.

2. **John chapter 2:1-12** can lead to some interesting discussions among Christians when it comes to the drinking of wine or alcoholic beverages. Is it always a sin for Christians to drink? Why or why not? When does it become wrong for a Christian to drink wine? (See **Rom. 14:23; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21**)

3. What truth can every Christian learn from **Rom. 14:20-21**? What are some ways that you can put this teaching into practice in your own life? With the need for Jesus being so widespread in our godless world today, no Christian can afford to be drunk. What encouraging truth do we learn from **Eph. 5:17-21**?

4. According to the Bible, it is not a sin to drink a cup of wine, but it is a sin to be drunk (or even buzzed for that matter). Whatever your conviction is on this topic of wine, we should all be gracious to people who might understand the Scriptures differently than us. What are some practical applications that you can take home with you from our teaching today? What surprised you most about this section of Scripture?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Jewish weddings were major events and lasted for an entire week.
- Hospitality in oriental society was not only highly prized, it was expected.
- To run out of wine at the wedding was not only an embarrassment to the couple, but the groom could also face a potential lawsuit from the bride's family.
- Mary recognized the problem and asked Jesus to help the young couple.
- It is the wise couple who invites Jesus to be a part of their marriage and home life.
- Turning water into wine was the first of the miracles Jesus performed.
- Each miracle pointed to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and had power over nature.
- The empty stone waterpots for ceremonial washing pointed to the emptiness of the Old Covenant ceremonial law; the wine pointed to the fullness and joy found in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ.