

1st. Miracle: Water into Wine

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 February 2025

Preacher: Rev. Ewen Matheson

[0 : 00] For a few moments, seeking the Lord's blessing, let's turn together to John's Gospel and chapter 2. We can read again verses 10 and 11. And said to him, Everyone serves the good wine first.

When the people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now. This is the first of his signs Jesus did at Canaan in Galilee and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him.

Verse 11 tells us this is the first of Jesus' signs that he did at Canaan in Galilee. And we come across here a very famous miracle of Jesus.

And I want us just to spend a little time considering this miracle. It's described by John as a sign. What does the sign mean?

What does it mean when we are given signs in Scripture and when Jesus performs signs? I want us to think most of all about not just the place, but also the purpose of this miracle.

[1 : 25] As I noted as we read together, it comes immediately after John chapter 1. Of course, the chapter and verse divisions are relatively modern. And really, we ought just to be reading continually through.

But the beginning of John's Gospel gives to us what we call a prologue, a sense of introduction. And the first few verses of John's Gospel weave together themes that are throughout the entirety of the Gospel.

And it begins, of course, with this high and great and lofty note. To describe to us the majesty and the identity of who Jesus is. To describe to us his eternity.

It describes to us the reality that he is the illumination of this world. Describes to us who he is, where he has come from, and why he has come.

And from the very beginning, it's describing to us his journey to the cross. And this is, of course, the climactic activity of our Lord. And where our Lord's ministry is bringing us to.

[2 : 36] And where the Gospels themselves bring us to as well. From here, of course, we read of John the Baptist. And then John highlights who Jesus is.

And, of course, he baptizes Jesus. And in the water of baptism, Jesus commences his ministry. There, bringing himself into that position and place of recognition and affiliation with his own people. And commencing this ministry. And collecting, at the end of John chapter 1, his disciples with him. And now we move. We move from the waters of the Jordan to this place in verse 1 in Cana, in Galilee.

And then in verse 12, we see more movement. Jesus' ministry has begun. The public ministry has begun in earnest. And he moves from place to place.

And he moves in all of these different ways. In the full context of his ministry. From its beginning at the baptism at the Jordan.

[3 : 42] To its completion and conclusion at Calvary's cross on the hill called Calvary. And in between, we have all the different elements recorded for us in the Gospel.

Of what Jesus' ministry looked like. When he preached and when he taught. When he performed signs and miracles. All the different things that he did.

And as we read the Gospels, it captivates our attention. And causes us to wonder and think on who this is. Because all of these great events.

And all of the entirety of the Gospel. Are teaching us and declaring to us. Who Christ is. And calling us in effect into his kingdom.

The first miracle is described for us in verse 1 onwards. As something that was performed at a wedding. This miracle is performed at a time of celebration.

[4 : 50] And a time of joy. And it brings this triumphant and joyous note. In connection with our understanding of the kingdom of God. It's nature.

And it's character. It's a great miracle. It's a familiar miracle. And it's a miracle I just want us to pause on here today. Just in connection with three headings.

And first of all presented to us is the need. The need. Jesus is at this wedding. We're told in verses 1 and 2. There's a wedding at Canaan.

And Jesus' mother Mary is there. Also there in verse 2. Invited to the wedding are Jesus and his disciples. They are there at this wedding.

We are given a time marker in verse 1. This is the third day. And it connects us. As I've said. If we in some way or another. Just reflect on the continuation. Rather than the division of chapters.

[5 : 49] We can consider verse 43. The next day. Verse 35. The next day. Verse 29. The next day. Now in chapter 2. Verse 1. The third day. These time markers.

That are communicating to us. This is a busy week. This is the busy week. Where Jesus is engaged. In all of these different activities. And even there in the time marker.

Of a week and days. What is presented to us. Is a greater time marker. Which Jesus introduces. As he speaks to his mother. In verse 4. And he speaks of my hour.

And he takes us out of the context. Of a week and days. To focus on. Upon an hour. And the hour is really.

How he describes. A specific moment. And this moment. He continually refers to. Throughout the gospels. And the gospel writers. Reference this hour too.

[6 : 49] It is the hour. And the moment. That has laid hold. Of the Lord's attention. Of what he is completely. Focused upon. It is why he has come.

He is speaking. About the time. Of his crucifixion. And the reality. Of his coming. Death. There. And so as we begin. At the outset of Jesus's ministry.

And in the first miracle. This is presented to us. Of primary importance. To reference. The reality. Of the purpose. Of the Lord's coming.

But back to the wedding. In verse one. A wedding in Cana. In Galilee. This happy. And joyous occasion. Occurs in this area. Of Galilee.

That was familiar. The area in which Jesus. Had grown up. And this place. Cana. Is somewhere. In the region. Of nine miles. North of Nazareth. His home.

[7 : 46] Town. And this wedding. Mary is there. Mary is there. And as the custom of the day. One of the women. Attending. This great wedding feast.

She is there assisting. She is helping with the hospitality. She is getting involved. As all of these different people come. And the weddings. In these days.

Of course. Would have lasted days. Days and days. Of hospitality. Days and days. Days of celebration. And joy. Days and days. Of different people. Coming.

And celebrating together. There is nothing. Quite as joyous. In a community. As a wedding. There are many times. And occasions. We come together.

In sad. Times. Where a community. Comes together. In grief. And mourning. And to support. One another. But a wedding. Is entirely. Different to that.

[8 : 40] Contrasting to that. It brings. A community. Togetherness. This element. Of joy. There is nothing. Like. A wedding. And as people. Come to the wedding.

They want to share. The joy. And they want to help. In some way. And display. Their own joy. Of this. Occasion. A wedding. Of course. Is part of.

The creation. Ordinance. Of marriage. That God. Has given to us. As people. And as. As a society. And as a culture.

And as a world. And as a creation. For what is good. For us. And it is. A blessing. A blessing. To the couple. A blessing.

To the families. A blessing. To the entire community. And the community. Come. To joy. In this event. And to enjoy it. And the community.

[9 : 34] Enjoys. The benefit. Of marriage. And the blessings. It brings. As with all weddings. There are invitations. The invitations. Go out.

And people come. And as people come. There is a responsibility. To the host. To ensure. That the event. Is well catered for. To ensure.

That everybody. Is happy. And nobody. Is worried. And the event. Is enjoyed. But here. We find immediately. There is a crisis.

A crisis. That would cause. Great embarrassment. In verse 3. The wine. Run out. And this is something.

Of great difficulty. Where all of these people. Have come. And you're hosting. All of these people. And you want to give them. Hospitality.

[10:29] But the resources. Run out. There isn't enough food. Or there isn't enough wine. To go around. And here it is. The wine. There isn't enough wine. For everybody.

And we recognize here. How it's run out. It's been consumed. And there are people. They're eating together. And there is no wine.

To drink. And Mary. Makes this known. To Jesus. In verse 3. The mother of Jesus. Said to him. They have no wine. She knows. She's involved. In hospitality. She's aware.

Of what's going on. And she knows. Where to go. When she's looking. For help. She goes to Jesus. And she quite simply.

States the problem. They have no wine. And as she comes. To Jesus. To state the issue. And the problem. That is there. She's anticipating.

[11:23] Something. She's anticipating. That he's going to help. That he's going to make. Things better. Wine. Wine.

Of course. This was very important. In biblical times. And that's because. The water was heavily polluted. And impure. I don't know. If you've been anywhere. Where you've got to be careful. With the water. You can't drink the water. And you become. Quite sensitive to this. And quite concerned. And we have. Of course. Paul speaking to Timothy.

And saying. To take a little wine. For his stomach. Because the water. Couldn't be trusted. It was so impure. The wine was safer. And the alcohol content.

Would have been. Significantly lower. Than the alcohol content. Of our wine. And so. They were able. To drink this wine. And it was safe. Of course.

[12:18] Drunkenness. In the Bible. Is considered sinful. But wine. Consumed properly. The Bible. Speaks of. As a symbol. Of joy. And a symbol.

Of prosperity. And a symbol. Of blessing. But here. They are. At a celebration. And there is no wine. They're eating their food.

And there's nothing. To drink with it. This is a huge problem. This is a crisis. In the wedding feast. This is a point. Of which. Would cause. Great embarrassment.

And great thirst. The jars are empty. It's quite symbolic too. That Jesus comes.

And there is a dryness. The dryness. That Jesus is encountering. As we realize. When we read verses 13 to 22. Of the cleansing of the temple.

[13:12] Is a spiritual barrenness. There is the need. Secondly. There is the miracle. The anticipation is. What is Jesus going to do? And the attention.

And the gospel. And the attention of Mary. Is on him. They have no wine. She's not turning to anybody else. It's him. And there is this expectation.

In verse 5. After Jesus speaks. In verse 4. Woman. What has this to do? What does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. Mary then responds to that.

In a positive way. And in verse 5. She tells the servants. To get ready. There is a sense of expectation. And investment. She is involving other people. And it's building up.

This whole concept. Of the anticipation. That Jesus is going to do something. To alleviate this crisis. And after what he says.

[14:10] In verse 4. She's expecting something to happen. And people to do what he says. To be obedient to his command. The environment. As we're noting here. Is around us.

Spiritually. Is dry. Symbolized by empty jars. Verse 7. The jars are there empty. These jars weren't actually the jars for the wine.

These were the jars for the water. Of purification. For the Jews. And the Jews. Went and involved themselves. In this ritual. The efforts of washing.

And cleansing themselves. Yet it was always ceremonial. It was always external. Jesus came to look for what was internal.

As these people go through all the ritualism. Of their religion. It would be said of them. As Isaiah had prophesied. The people honor me with their lips.

[15:09] But their hearts are far from me. They follow rules. But they don't give their heart. And Jesus is identifying to us here.

This is displayed in a lack of spiritual fruit. And a lack of spiritual vibrancy in the community. That people haven't engaged their hearts.

It's easy to keep rules. It's easy to do the external things. But it's not sufficient. It doesn't satisfy.

Then in verse 7. Jesus said fill the jars with water. We're told in verse 6. That they hold 20 or 30 gallons of water. These jars that had been used for the washing.

And the rites of purification. Jesus says fill them up. Fill these jars up. These big empty stone jars. That are able to contain gallons and gallons of water.

[16:12] Pour in the water. Fill the water up. Fill it to the brim. Fill up these jars. And so the servants do what Jesus tells them to do. They take the water.

The dirty. The dirty. Impure water. The undrinkable water. That filthy water.

Gallons and gallons and gallons of it. And they pour them into these stone jars. Filling them right up. With the whole situation filled with this expectation.

That something is going to happen here. That Jesus is going to do something. And without any further ado. In verse 7.

They filled them up. He said. Draw some out. And take to the master of the feast. So they took it out. With nothing else. They just take it out. And somewhere along the way.

[17:13] A miracle has happened. Somewhere along the way. The filthy. Has been made clean. Made pure. Has been cleansed.

And to the extent. As we noted earlier. In verses 9 and 10. The master of the feast says. This is the best. This is the best wine. We've had all day. And this is unusual.

Of course. To leave the best. To last. Usually. You leave the. You would use the best first. But rather here. There is. This commendation.

This satisfaction. The reality. That they've been saved. From embarrassment. And everybody. Who partook there. Enjoyed this wine. And saw the pleasure of it.

Thirdly. There is the sign. We are actually told. What this is all about. In verse 11. This is the first of the signs. It manifested.

[18:11] His glory. And His disciples. Believed. In Him. There are two things. It demonstrates. The glory.

Of our Savior. And secondly. It confirms. Convicts. The disciples. Of who He is. This is the purpose. Of the sign. Isn't it? When we're going. On a journey. We follow a sign. Not to stop. At the sign. The sign. Isn't taking us. To the destination. The sign. Is taking us.

To the destination. It's not. The destination. We follow it. We don't just stop. At the sign. And so. All the signs. Are pointing us. To Jesus. The miracle.

Is not about the wine. The miracle. Is about Him. It's displaying. To us. Who He is. The work. Here. Is displaying. To us.

[19:04] His power. And how He is able. To bring. True purity. How He can take. What is filthy. And dirty. And impure.

And He can cleanse. In a way. That nothing. Else. Can. This sign. Is brought. To us here. Where they. Themselves. Have been using. These stone jars.

In verse 6. To wash. Themselves. The barrenness. Of what they do. The reality. Of how even. In their continual. Washing. They cannot.

Take away. By themselves. The impurity. Of their sin. And He is displaying. To them here. That the new. Has come. That something.

New. Has begun. And that it is. Powerful. And it is. Life. Transforming. It cleanses. It takes. Those. Who are filthy.

[19:58] In their sins. And washes. Them. And makes. Them clean. This is what. The gospel. Does. This is what. Jesus. Does to us. Though our sins.

Be as scarlet. We will be. Whiter than the snow. He washes. Us. And makes us. Clean. In the way. And manner. That we could never. Do by ourselves.

The miracle. Points. That the Messiah. Has come. It points. To his glory. It points. To who he is. It is a revelation. It is an invitation.

The kingdom. Has come. The gospel. Is here. Jesus. Is here. And he is inviting you. To come.

To be cleansed. Fully. And completely. To the sense. Of satisfaction. To the reality. Of washing. All sin. Away. To that sense.

[20 : 58] Of the abundance. Of joy. And pleasure. To come. To him. And the reality. That the best. Of wine. Was last.

To speak. To us. Of the joy. Of the marriage. Supper. Of the lamb. This is what. We're being. Invited. To come. To. His kingdom. His feast.

This savior. That he does. For us. What we cannot do. For ourselves. What all the washing. In this world. Cannot do. A cleansing. Within. And to recognize. For ourselves. When we feel. That guilt.

And filth. Of our sin. To wonder. Where can we go. To wonder. How we come in. To this kingdom. How we are.

[21 : 54] God's people. Jesus tells. Nicodemus. In chapter 3. That we must. Be born again. We must come.

To him. We must believe. And trust. In him. We must see. Beyond the signs. We must come. To this. Jesus. All of the signs. All of the miracles. All of the teaching. Of the gospel. That we've heard. For ourselves. They're pointing to him.

And his great. Finished work. And that wonderful. Gospel invitation. It's a free offer. God. Come without money.

And without price. Come to him. The invitation. Is open. Whoever you are. Wherever you are.

[22 : 54] However filthy. Your sins. Have left you. There is one here. Who cleanses. And who washes. And who grants to you. This great invitation. To his kingdom.

And his feast. A gracious invitation. That is free. And all that we have to do. Is to partake. And when we come to that point.

That as the psalmist. At the end of Psalm 23. Looks upon. And sees goodness and mercy. All his life. And then he says. That he is in the house of God.

Then we will know. And see. That he saved the best for last. That this is what he is calling us to.

And inviting us to behold. And lay hold of. In him alone. Amen. May the Lord bless our thoughts. Let's pray together. Gracious and most holy God.

[23 : 53] We give thanks to you. For your word. And for the gospel invitation. And for what it brings to us. And we pray that you would forgive us. Our sins. Wash us.

And make us clean. And all we ask is in Jesus name. Amen. We'll conclude by singing God's praise. In Psalm number 4.

As we have it on page 4. Psalm 4 on page 4. Verses 6 to 8. Oh who can show us any good? I hear so many say. Oh Lord shine on us with your light.

Show us your face I pray. You fill my heart with greater joy. Than others may have found. As they rejoice at harvest time. When grain and wine abound.

I will lie down and sleep in peace. My heart will rest secure. For you alone oh gracious Lord. Will keep me safe. And sure. We'll sing these words.

[24 : 50] And then conclude. With a benediction. O who can show us any good?

I hear so many say. O Lord shine on us with your light.

Show us your face I pray. You fill my heart with greater joy.

That others may have found. As they rejoice at harvest time.

With grain and wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace.

[26 : 19] My heart will rest secure. For you alone oh gracious Lord.

will keep me safe and sure. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.