

**Livin' the Life**  
**The First Sign, part 9**  
**John 2:1-11**  
November 19, 2017

We are in our series in the Gospel of John, "Livin' the Life" looking at what life in Jesus means for us today. John wrote to convince the unconvinced and to encourage the convinced. Today we begin looking at the first miracle in the ministry of Jesus, The First Sign, 2:1-11. The last few weeks we have seen Jesus gathering disciples, today we see Jesus manifesting his glory at a wedding in Cana, his first sign in what is called the book of signs.<sup>1</sup>

**Jesus Interaction with Mother (1-5)**

Jesus' mother, Jesus and his disciples were all at the wedding (1-2). Jewish weddings during this time were a big deal, lasting up to a week with dancing and eating and drinking nightly. The couple was paraded around town like a king and queen. They were a festive and joyous occasion. Hospitality was very important. The groom's family was responsible and did everything in their power to pull it off well. At some point the wine ran out and Jesus' mother came to him and informed him that they were out of wine (3). Wine was an integral part of the wedding celebration and it was a great embarrassment to have run out. We do not know why she told Jesus. Maybe she had something to do with the preparations and was looking for help. She is probably a widow at this point so maybe she had come to rely on Jesus. Jesus' response is a bit puzzling, "woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come (4)?" Jesus does not use mother but "woman," a more formal name, like ma'am, distancing himself from her. It appears that he interprets her comment as asking him to go public with a miracle but he informs her that, "my hour has not come." Hour is a word in this gospel that points to the public display of God's glory in Jesus' death, resurrection, and glorification. It is this glory through suffering which will bring the usher the Kingdom blessings, salvation and deliverance, a joyous occasion when wine will flow liberally (Jer 31:12; Hos 14:7; Amos 9:13-14; Joel 3:18). Wine in the Old Testament is a sign of God's blessing and provision and a most importantly, a sign of the Messianic Age. But that day is not now, not here. His time has not yet come nor will his timing be circumvented by his mother or anyone else. He is sovereign over his own death and it will go as planned. His greater loyalty is to God his Father. He is treating her as a disciple here; she does not have an inside track with Jesus. Spiritual loyalties trump physical loyalties with Jesus. Then Mary, in an act of faith, tells the servants to "do whatever he tells you (5)." If you don't know the story, you are wondering what is he going to do?

**Jesus' Interaction with Servants (6-8)**

John tells us that there are six stone water jars used for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty to thirty gallons of water for ceremonial/ritual of washing before meals (6). Jesus tells the servants to fill the jars with water and so they did, all the way to the top (7). So, you have somewhere between one hundred twenty and one hundred eighty gallons of water. Then Jesus tells the servants to take a sample of the water turned to wine to the master of the feast, the host or MC (8). He did not know where this wine came from so after tasting it, he calls the bridegroom over and exclaims, "everyone normally serves the good wine first and when taste buds are numb, the cheap wine is served but you have kept the good wine for last (9-10)!"

Let me unpack this a bit before we look at what John says about this miracle. By changing the water into wine, Jesus is saying that the Old Covenant has run its course and is now empty and that Jesus is establishing a New Covenant with Israel (Heb 8:8-12). This is because the purification system of the Old Covenant pointed to and is fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate purifier, the lamb of God takes away the sins of the world. Jesus is the one who cleanses us from our sins, forgives our sins. In a general sense, the wine in this life always runs out. Life always disappoints at some

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<sup>1</sup> The book normally can be divided into two sections, the book of signs and book of glory but I divide it into four sections, Prologue (1:1-18); book of signs to Israel (1:19-12:50); Son of God ministry to disciples (13:1-17:26); Son of God suffering and glory (18:1-20:31); epilogue (21:1-25).

point, it always comes up short. All the things we seek in this life to find joy and happiness always ends in disappointment. Children can't wait to become adults then adulthood disappoints. You get your dream job and in the end, it's just another job. You marry the person of your dreams and realize that they are not all they are cracked up to be. The only person who can guarantee lasting joy is Jesus (10:10). Eternal life is the life of God, full and overflowing. It gives the joy that brings lasting contentment and satisfaction that transcends your circumstances. The wine Jesus provides ushers in eternal life, the full life. What Jesus promises is not just for this life but the fullness of joy that only gets better in eternity, in the New Creation (Rev 19:3).

### **John's Interpretation of the sign (9-12)**

Then John interprets this sign for us. At first, Jesus rebukes his mother for asking him to do something about the lack of wine and then he changes the water into wine! It is as though he says, it is not my time to perform a public sign for all to see but I will perform a prophetic sign, points to something greater, for my disciples to see. The changing of water into wine is a sign post pointing beyond the miracle to Jesus' glory (1:14). Notice that John mentions no response from the others who saw the sign - the servants, the master of the feast, or the bridegroom. Only the disciples saw the glory manifested and as a result believed. This is a sign that points to his hour, his coming death and resurrection that will secure eternal life for those who believe. It also points to the better wedding feast that will be celebrated with Jesus, the better bridegroom and better purifier, where the wine never runs out (Rev 19:6-9). Their seeing is a spiritual seeing, a spiritual perception. Miracles are not just a display of power but are signs posts that point to God's glory. If we are enamored with the sign but not the sign giver, then we miss the point of the sign. Worse still is to miss the glory of Jesus by being bored with Jesus, apathetic to Jesus, disinterested in Jesus. To neglect and overlook Jesus which happens on a daily basis. He came to his own and own did not receive him.

### **Take Aways . . .**

- Have you seen and tasted Jesus glory? Recently?
- How is Jesus' glory satisfying to you?
- Jesus is better than anything and everything this life offers

### **Questions for Life Groups:**

1. What in life has been disappointing to you and how did you respond to that disappointment?
2. Why do we so pursue those things that will ultimately disappoint?
3. What glory did the disciples see?
4. Have you seen his glory? Does it satisfy?
5. What do you see in Jesus that is glorious to you, that draws you to him?
6. Who has God put into your life to share Jesus with?
7. How would you describe eternal life?

