**The Miracles of Christ (Week 4). The Wedding in Cana**

**This week we will look at the first miracle of Christ, whereby He changed the jars of water into wine.**

You may remember that some months ago Errol Wagner gave a sermon on this miracle which I found to be most informative. I have used some of his notes in compiling this study, but, as usual, much of the content comes from other commentators, and also yourselves from whom I seek special clarity.

**Jesus Changes Water Into Wine (John 2: 1-12)**

**2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, 2and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3When 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.”**

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

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

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

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

**They did so, 9and 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 aside 10and 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.”**

**11What 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.**

**12After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.**

The reference to the third day suggests the wedding followed three days after the previous event in the gospel, which was the meeting with Nathanael, who became one of the disciples.

Wesley concludes that Nathanael and Bartholomew, mentioned in the synoptic gospels, are one and the same person:

*Nathanael was probably the same with Bartholomew, that is, the son of Tholomew. St. Matthew joins Bartholomew with Philip, Mt 10:3, and St. John places Nathanael in the midst of the apostles, immediately after Thomas, John 21:2, just as Bartholomew is placed, Acts 1:13.*

It seems Mary, and therefore her family, were close to those involved in the wedding at Cana. Various commentators draw different conclusions from this, going so far as to speculate whether the bridegroom was not one of the disciples. This is mere unsupported speculation. However, the fact that Mary addressed the servants a little later in the narrative, suggests she was probably involved in the arrangements for the wedding and was comfortable giving the servants instructions.

**They have no more wine**: We don’t know why Mary brought this problem to her son Jesus, at this time. Perhaps she anticipated this was the day Jesus would miraculously demonstrate that He was the Messiah. Remember what Gabriel had said to her in Luke chapter 1 before the immaculate conception.

*God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.”*

*29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”*

Matthew Henry comments:

It wasn’t wrong for Mary to sense that the time had come for her Son to enter public ministry. She knew He had been baptized by John and confirmed with a heavenly sign at His baptism. Mary knew He endured temptation in the wilderness. She knew Jesus had been publically introduced as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* (John 1:29), and had begun to gather disciples to Himself.

**Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?** Jesus spoke to His mother with a term of respect, but He did *not* call her “mother.” Jesus wanted to emphasize that now, at the beginning of His public ministry, He now had a different relationship with Mary.

(Compare this with Prince William who, when speaking in public about his grandmother, refers to “the Queen”, not Granny).

Moses recognized that parental duties were subordinate to divine (Deuteronomy 33:9); and Jesus emphasized the principles in Matthew 10:37.

Deut 33:9 (Talking about Levi)

*He said of his father and mother, ‘I have no regard for them. ’He did not recognize his brothers or acknowledge his own children, but he watched over your word and guarded your covenant.*

Matt 10:37

*Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

Jesus seemed to say to Mary, “I won’t do it. It’s not time” – but then He went on to do it. We noted in the miracle of the raising of Lazarus that there were three instances when those dear to Jesus asked Him to do something. In all three cases he indicated that the time was not right, but He went on to fulfil the actions in the appropriate time.

In the previous miracles that we have studied it is noticeable that before undertaking the physical aspect of the miracle, Jesus looks up to heaven, expressing the fact to those with him that the miracle must be seen as revealing the sovereignty of God. It therefore seems likely that the time taken between telling Mary that “It’s not time” and performing the miracle could well have seen Christ praying to his Father.

So perhaps what He really was saying to Mary was, “We now have a different relationship. Let me consult My heavenly Father.” Remember Jesus later said in this Gospel:

· *Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.* (John 5:19)

· *I can of Myself do nothing… I do not seek My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me.* (John 5:30)

· *I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.* (John 8:28)

· *For I always do those things that please Him.* (John 8:29)

One can argue that Mary’s response to the rebuke of Jesus suggest she may well have observed him praying and therefore knew that Jesus would use the opportunity to display his true role in the world. We will see how the change from water to wine has a much greater meaning than saving the family from a humiliating occurrence.

**Do whatever he tells you.**

Why do we not always do the same?

**Six stone jars.** *Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing.*

Mark 7: 1-4 shows the significance of these jars in terms of Jewish ceremonies.

*The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3(The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)*

The use of these ceremonial jars by Christ demonstrates the law and ceremonies of Moses will be replaced by something new; the saving grace of God through Jesus. And further more they will be filled to the brim. There will not be any need for additives.

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Also worth noting is the fact that the books of the old testament were often stored in jars, as was emphasised in the salvaging of the dead sea scrolls.

Christ told the servants to fill the jars with water, which they did right up to the brim. Jesus then said “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet”. No blessing of the water in the jars or even specifying the change that was necessary. Simply draw out the liquid.

And he did not say “draw it out and let me taste it”. Even though this was his first miracle there was no doubting the assurance of what was happening. No waiting before offering the wine to the master of the banquet.

**The water that had been turned into wine.**

The start of the events that lead into God laying down the Law for the Jewish nation can be found in the **turning of water into blood**, when Moses confronts Pharaoh.

Exodus 4:9 (NKJ) *And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.*

Exodus 7:20 (NKJ)*And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.*

At the wedding in Cana we see the start of Jesus’ ministry is signalled by the **turning of water into wine**. (v9: *when the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine*).

This clearly shows the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The curse of the law turns water into blood, suggesting violence and terror; whereby the blessing of the gospel turns water into wine, a comfort and sustaining drink associated with blessing, joy and freedom.

Errol Wagner quotes a number of Old Testament prophets who link wine with the new age of salvation through Christ.

Joel 3: 18

*And it will come to pass in that day  
That the mountains shall drip with new wine,  
The hills shall flow with milk,  
And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water;  
A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord  
And water the Valley of Acacias.*

Amos 9:13-14

*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.*

*14And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.*

**“but you have saved the best till now.”**

This was the best wine. The leader of the feast even felt the need to compliment the bridegroom on the quality and the fact that he had apparently gone against tradition (ceremony) and kept the best for last. We need to ensure that we appreciate what the bridegroom, Jesus Christ, has given us. Is there anything better than eternal life in the presence of God?

Jon Bloom writes:

*Out of Jesus’s fullness the wedding guests received grace upon grace. They drank the very best earthly wine ever created, made by the Creator of grapes himself. But more than that, the wine they drank freely was a foretaste of the gospel.*

*Jesus knew the time for making the real gospel wine of Calvary had not yet come. But this wedding wine, poured out of vessels of purification, foreshadowed that best of all wines, which would be served after humans had done their sinful insufficient best to meet their need and failed. This wine would flow freely with infinite abundance from the purest Vessel of all time for the greatest wedding of all time.*

The fact that Christ chooses to begin his ministry at a wedding is significant. Wagner suggests that the Bible uses the marriage to symbolise the joy and celebration of the new age of salvation brought in by Jesus – the new heaven and the new earth.

In Matthew 22 Jesus uses the concept of marriage in a parable.

*Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.*

This can be seen as the Jewish religious leaders refusing to accept Christ’s invitation to a new beginning preferring to stay in the old imperfect relationship.

In Revelation 19:9 the theme of the wedding supper is clearly used to bring understanding to God’s plan for man.

*“the angel said to me, ‘write: blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the lamb.’”*

And also in Revelation 21: 1-2

*Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

Christ is using the wedding feast and changing the water into wine to show to the world that there will come a time when the final marriage between God the Son and the church will usher in the new age whereby the water of the law and prophets will be changed into the wine of Christ.

How fitting is it that we use wine to remind us of Jesus when we come to His table in Holy Communion.

Errol Wagner says: “we see Jesus beginning his ministry with a miracle of transformation pointing to the fact that he came to transform the old order into a new order.”

In Romans 8: 1-4 Paul writes:

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set youfree from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

**And his disciples believed in him.**

It is clear from John chapter 1 that the disciples present at the wedding already believed that Jesus was the Messiah. The comment that his disciples believed in him indicates a deepening understanding by them of the character of Jesus and his role in saving humanity as they spent more time with Him. We too can understand more of Christ by spending more time with Him through studying His word and participating in our local church.

A group of people posing for the camera

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