

*“Water to Wine”* (Part 2)  
February 24, 2013  
Text: John 2:6-11

**Last Sunday we began our study of Jesus’ first miracle,  
His changing water into wine.**

Jesus’ miracles were not random acts, done on a whim and intended only to impress people w/ His incredible/divine power.

They were God acting thru Jesus, attesting to His deity.

In Acts 2:22, Peter will say of Jesus that He was=>

*“a man **attested** to you by **God** with **miracles** and **wonders** and **signs**.”*

So Jesus’ miracles were God’s signs pointing to Jesus Himself, as His own Son, the Messiah, and man’s Savior.

Today’s text will also show that X’s sign miracles were designed to glorify Him, and to establish believers’ faith in Him.

**Jesus’ turning water into wine will set the stage for all of His other miracles in this Gospel, by revealing the nature/purpose of those miracles.**

1) This miracle, like all His miracles was a Selfless act.

Less than 2 weeks earlier, after fasting for 40 days, Jesus had been tempted by Satan to turn stones into bread.

He was fully capable of doing it, could have done it, and would have had every right to do it, because food is a basic necessity of life for every man.

But Jesus had declined to create bread for His own comfort,  
esp. at the suggestion of Satan.

Now, however, He will create something for others that  
wasn't even a necessity—wine.

Jesus never used His divine powers for private ends.

2) This miracle, like all the others, would be a blessing to people.

Moses' miracle-working career began by turning water into  
blood, as a curse on the Egyptians.

But all of Jesus' miracles would be blessings, because He  
came to give people insight into the blessedness of  
God's Kingdom—an abundant life of peace/joy in  
fellowship w/ God.

Jesus 1<sup>st</sup> miracle blessed a young couple at their wedding,  
marriage being one of God's great blessings to man.

Peter described marriage as the "*grace of life*" (I Pet 3:8),  
taking an otherwise good life and adding more joy to  
it when X is invited to be part of that marriage, a/w/a  
the wedding.

3) This miracle, like most all X's miracles, was an act of  
compassion undertaken to meet a pressing need.

The wine had failed, and the bridegroom was in danger of  
being disgraced among his neighbors, and even being  
sued by the bride's family.

So w/ compassion Jesus created the wine that we  
needed and resolved the bridegroom's problem.

When Jesus miraculously fed the 4000 (Mt 15:32), He said,

*“I feel **compassion** for the multitude, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not wish to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”*

Jesus then directed them all to sit on the ground, took seven loaves of bread & a few small fish, gave thanks for them, and miraculously turned them into food enough to feed everyone there.

Many (if not most) of Jesus’ other miracles were also motivated by compassion.

4) This miracle of changing water into wine, like all of Jesus’ miracles, demonstrated His love for the common man.

He might have sought an audience w/ the High Priest, the Roman governor, or the rich/noble of the land so they could witness the performance of His first miracle.

He might well have chosen Jerusalem as the site where He would introduce the world to His miraculous powers, even waiting until Passover, when throngs of Jews would pack the Temple, & could be witnesses of this historic event.

Instead, he chose an out-of-the-way village in the despised farming region of Galilee.

He chose the wedding of a peasant who couldn’t afford enough wine for all his guests, & yet invited Jesus and His 6 disciples to attend as well.

Have you ever known anyone like that?

I have—his name was Dick Hicks.

He was a seminary student w/ very little money and a small family to feed.

He invited me over to his apartment for lunch one time, and I told him I didn't want to insult him, but he needed every scrap of food he had for his children.

He laughed & said, we'll just add a little more water to the gruel.

I did have lunch w/ Dick and his wife Jodie, and they were very gracious.

I think the bridegroom in our text must have been much like Dick Hicks.

Later on, Jesus would heal a lame man waiting hopelessly by the pool of Siloam for healing, people w/ withered limbs, blind men, a centurion's servant, lepers, demoniacs—a host of other commoners & despised/outcast nobodies.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of this delightful narrative about Jesus' changing water into wine, divides itself into 3 parts=>  
Jesus' Commands (6-8), A Headwaiter's Evaluation (9f)  
and John's Conclusion (11).**

**\* Jesus' Commands**

**You'll remember from our last study that Mary had just told the servants at the wedding to do whatever Jesus told them to do.**

Now He was about to start giving them directions, prob. nothing like what they had expected of Him.

**[John 2:6]**=> *“Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.”*

**The stone waterpots ranged in size from 20 to 30 gallons.**

That’s a lot of water—120-150 gallons total, in the 6 waterpots, combined.

The large green dumpsters most of us fill with trash and set out by the curb for pick-up, are rated at 96 gallons.

So imagine 1½ of those filled to overflowing & you’re close to the total volume of water in those 6 stone waterpots.

John says they were *“for the Jewish custom of purification.”*

Mark 7 explains this custom=> *“The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; / and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots”* (Mk 7:3-4).

This was a ceremonial washing ritual, which some sources indicate took place both before/after each meal.

We might assume the cups/pitchers/copper-pots were emptied and wiped clean before this ceremonial washing, but even so, this water was certainly not sterile.

This was a public washing facility where the water was prob. never emptied out and replaced.

And this was the water Jesus was going to turn into wine.

**Why would John include this detail about the waterpots?**

- \* Maybe his sense of humor was showing through here.
- \* Prob. also because he was writing to Gentiles who weren't familiar with this Jewish purification ritual.
- \* Undoubtedly because John wanted us to gain some perspective of the huge dimensions of this 130 gallon miracle.
- \* Possibly because he viewed it as representative of the transition from OT traditions, to the new/joyous era of X's Kingdom, pictured as wine at a wedding feast.

Rom 14 says the Kingdom of God is "*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,*" & wine is often associated w/ joy in Scripture (Rom 14:17).

[Verse 7]=> "*Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim.*"

**"They" refers to the servants mentioned in verse 5, to whom Mary had said, "Whatever He says to you, do it."**

Who exactly these servants were, we can't be sure.

- \* They might have been the bridegroom's household servants; but it seems unlikely, in that the groom couldn't afford sufficient wine for his wedding guests, let alone servants of his own.
- \* They might have been an independent crew of workers/caterers who hired out for weddings, and

worked under the supervision of a “*headwaiter*” mentioned in vs 9.

\* They might have been friends/family who just voluntarily pitched in to help out during the week of this wedding.

**Whoever these servants were, they did just as Jesus asked/commanded.**

That would have entailed hand-carrying gallons/gallons of water from a city well to the waterpots in the groom’s courtyard. It would also have involved obedience to a directive given by Jesus, that made no apparent sense.

The servants may/may-not have been aware of the need for wine.

But even if they were, they could not have seen any reasonable connection between dealing with a wine shortage, & filling these 6 large stone waterpots w/ water.

They filled them nonetheless—right up to the brim.

**Now we see Jesus’ last 2 commands to the servants.**

[Verse 8]=> “*And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter.’ And they took it to him.*”

“*The headwaiter*” seems to have been a man who presided at large entertainments, oversaw all the arrangements, and managed the practical details of caring for guests.

Such men were customarily used at Gk/Roman feasts.

The non-canonical book of Ecclesiasticus describes a Jewish feast in which a guest served as headwaiter, which may well have been the case at this wedding as well.

**Jesus' next command to the servants was to draw out some of the water they had just poured into the waterpots.**

His final command was to take it to the headwaiter for his inspection/approval.

Somewhere in all of this, the servants must have noticed that the water they had pour into the waterpots was not red because it was now wine.

It's all so understated, that we can't be sure when it actually became wine, but we can be sure that the liquid the servants had poured into the waterpots had the molecular structure of water.

That's 1 oxygen atom bonded w/ 2 hydrogen atoms.

And 2<sup>nd</sup>, the liquid which they drew out of those same waterpots had the more complex molecular structure of wine.

It also contains oxygen and hydrogen atoms, but other elements as well.

Where did they come from? Jesus had created them.

I.e., it was a miracle.

Jesus hadn't touched the waterpots, or even raised His hands over the waterpots, saying, "Let there be wine!"

But there was the wine nonetheless, simply because He, the  
Creator of all things, had willed that there be wine.

**This wine's vintage was unlike any other.**

No grapes had been crushed, because there'd been no grapes,  
from which this wine was squeezed.

No vines had ever been carefully cultivated to produce the  
best grapes possible—there had been no grapes, no  
vines, at all.

The Creator had simply willed into existence what was prob. the  
best wine that had ever graced/stimulated a human palate.  
Instant wine!

**There is only 1 correct interpretation for any passage in  
Scripture, & John himself gives us the correct  
interpretation of this passage in verse 11=>**

He says Jesus did this 1<sup>st</sup> sign-miracle to manifest His own glory  
(as God's Son), & to strengthen the faith of believers.  
That's what this miracle was all about, & that's what it  
meant.

But while any given text can have only 1 interpretation, it can  
have many different applications, and this one does.

Application 1—we learn here that Jesus gives us commands.

That would come as a shock to much of today's church,  
which believes that we are supposed to give Him  
commands.

This week I heard a “Word of Faith” teacher actually say that until we pray for healing, Jesus cannot heal us—that the power is in our words, not in X Himself.

Not only is that arrogant foolishness;

It’s outright heresy, denigrating/dishonoring the name of the Son of God.

In our text, X commanded the servants to “*Fill the waterpots with water.*”

At other times He commanded a blind man, “*Wash in the pool of Siloam*” (Jn 9:7), a dead man named Lazarus to “*Come forth*” from his tomb (Jn 11:43), & the spiritually dead to “*repent and believe in the gospel*” (Mk 1:15).

I.e., He commands people to act in the obedience of faith, even doing things they aren’t capable of doing, and to do them by His enablement.

E.g. dead men cannot come out of grace, and the spiritually dead aren’t capable of really repenting/believing on their own.

But X commands them to do these things, as He empowers them to obey.

2<sup>nd</sup>, we learn from our text that we are to obey X’s commands, & we’re to do so wholeheartedly (right up to the brim).

His commands may make no more sense to us that filling waterpots in order to make wine, but we are to obey Him.

We're to obey even when we think we have a better idea.

E.g. we may think that in addition to believing in Jesus for salvation, we should also showing Him they're serious about it by doing some painful penance, or beating up on themselves emotionally & cry a lot.

But He says, "Just repent/believe on Me," & that's what we're to do.

Nothing more, and nothing less.

3<sup>rd</sup>, though obedience doesn't replace true faith, it accompanies faith if it's true faith.

The servants could have said to Jesus, "We believe in You, so we trust that You can fill the waterpots Yourself. "We don't want to interfere or steal Your glory, so we'll just stay out of the way back here among the lounge chairs."

A faithful servant of our Lord says, "I don't know why He commands me to fill the waterpots, & I don't see the connection between water/wine, but I'm going to obey Him by faith, & leave the results to Him."

He is Lord, and I'm just His servant.

Servants are supposed to obey their lords.

4<sup>th</sup>, our obedience alone produces nothing apart from His power.

We may preach the gospel & plead w/ people to believe it.  
But our efforts alone could never turn water into wine.  
Nor can they persuade a single soul to believe on X.  
We readily acknowledge our complete dependence on His  
power.

**\* The Headwaiter's Evaluation**

[Verses 9-10]=> *“And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, / and said to him, ‘Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer. You have kept the good wine until now.’”*

**As I said last time, I would love to have been there with a video camera, filming the servants' reactions to all this.**

I don't know how they could have restrained themselves from bursting into laughter when this wine expert declared that what was little more than dishwater a minute earlier, was now the best wine he had tasted at this wedding.

John himself must have been smiling as he wrote it.

The headwaiter's evaluation of the wine gave independent confirmation of the fact that, 1<sup>st</sup>, it was indeed wine, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, that it was truly good wine.

He thought he was just sampling the wine to make sure it was good enough for the guests, but in fact, he was unwittingly giving witness to a divine miracle.

**The headwaiter spoke as someone who was thoroughly competent in his vocation.**

He knew all the tricks of the trade, one of which was a proverbial truth that you didn't save your best wines for last.

After people have drunk enough good wine, their senses are dulled even if they're just feeling a mild sense of exhilaration.

That's when you bring out the cheaper wine, because they prob. won't even notice it, & if they do, they prob. won't care.

The headwaiter was surprised that the bridegroom seemed to have ignored this well-known rule of wine service.

**Again, we can apply the truths in verses 9-10 to own lives as Xns living under the redemptive-purpose and sovereign-providence of God's grace.**

1<sup>st</sup>, your best life is not now, in spite of a popular Xn author's contention that it should be.

Satan wants you to believe that, so you'll place all you're your hopes on achievement/accumulation/acquisition in this world.

But that never brings true happiness, as he tricks you w/ the cheap wines of this world that only deaden your soul to the bitter/sour aftertaste that leave.

By contrast, the believer lives in the anticipation of the good wine Jesus is saving for him in the future.

Some of God's dearest, most faithful/godly saints are now living lives of bitter hardship/illness/poverty.

You/I can both name some wonderful believers like that.

When they leave this world, they will leave all that behind, enter into heaven, look into their Lord's face, & say, "You have kept the good wine until now."

\*When their bodies are resurrected from death & raised in power;

\* When they take possession of all the riches of the inheritance that awaits them in heaven;

\* When they wake up in glory & realize they'll never again have to suffer persecution or the disdain of a world that despises them for their faith;

\* Then (and only then) they'll get their first taste of the good wine.

Even some of God's people who are the most spiritually gifted, who have plumbed the deepest truths of God's Word, and who have accomplished more for Him in this world than all the rest of us put together, will say, "Lord Jesus, You saved the best wine for last."

Even those believers who have met w/ nothing but personal success in this world—whose every effort God has blessed, whose leaf never withers, and who prosper in whatever they do (Psa 1:3), will discover the incomparable sweetness of God's wine, saved in heaven for their arrival.

## \* John's Conclusion

**John concludes his account of Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> miracle by**

**interpreting its meaning, for us=>**

1<sup>st</sup>, it was more than a miracle; it was a sign from God.

2<sup>nd</sup>, it was intended to “*manifest*” (to indirectly reveal) X's glory.

3<sup>rd</sup>, it caused His disciples to believe in Him w/ even greater faith than they already had.

[Verse 11]=> “*This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*”

Better=> “*believed into*” (spiritual union/identification w/ Jesus)

**John refers to Jesus' miracle as a “sign.”**

Signs aren't intended to be works of art, that draw attention to themselves, causing us to admire them for their own sakes.

They are practical pieces of equipment, designed to point away from themselves, to something else.

Jesus' miracle of changing water to wine isn't intended for us to merely gaze at for its own sake, but points us to Jesus Himself, causing us to ask, “Who is this Man who did such a wonderful thing?”

Jesus' creation of wine from water was a miraculous act, that revealed Him to be the glorious/all-powerful Son of God that He is.

But although it revealed that truth about Him, it didn't necessarily convince people of it.

**We can think of Jesus' sign-miracles as decision-points He put in the paths of everyone who witnessed them.**

When you come to a fork in the road, and discover a sign that says it points in the direction of your destination, you must decide for yourself whether/not you're going to believe the sign & its message.

You don't know the sign-maker, & you don't know his motive for placing that sign there (maybe it's a trick).

Jesus repeatedly confronted people w/ sign-miracles, forcing them to make a decision about Him, based on those signs.

**Some people began to believe on Him because of them=>**

- \* Jn 2:23=> *"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many **believed** in His name, beholding His **signs** which He was doing."*
- \* Jn 3:2=> *"This man [Nicodemus] came to Him by night, and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we **know** that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these **signs** that You do unless God is with him.'"*
- \* Jn 6:2=> *"A great multitude was **following** Him, because they were seeing the **signs** which He was performing on those who were sick."*

Jesus' disciples had already begun to believe in Him.

E.g. after Andrew first met w/ Jesus, he went/found his brother Peter, declaring his faith in Jesus saying=>

*"We have found the **Messiah**" (Jn 1:41).*

Looking at Jesus open-mindedly, & w/ eyes of faith, Andrew had come to believe in Him.

The same was true of Peter/John/James/Philip/Nathanael.

The miracle at the wedding in Cana just confirmed and strengthened the faith in X which they already had in their hearts.

**But not everyone who saw the signs believed in Jesus w/ saving faith.**

And even some who did believe, believed in X w/ merely tentative faith.

Again, Jn 2:23=> *“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many **believed** in His name, beholding His **signs** which He was doing. / But Jesus, on His part, was **not entrusting** Himself to them, for He knew all men, / and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man”* (2:23-25).

What was in these men was a very tentative, provisional faith, that wasn't ready to rest itself in X in any final sense.

**Some people just made up their minds not to believe in Jesus' name, in spite of the evidence of His sign-miracles.**

Jn 12=> *“But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were **not believing** in Him;”* (12:37-37).

When people choose to disbelieve like this, in spite of the evidence revealed to them by God, they call God a liar, and they increase their own guilt before Him.

Mt 11 says that Jesus=> *“Began to reproach the cities in which most of His **miracles** were done, because they did **not repent**”* (11:20).

**This morning, you have seen the sign of X's changing water into wine, in your mind's eye, as we've read about it.**

Vicariously, you were there—you too saw that red wine.  
You too are accountable for how you will choose to respond to it.

Either you will believe in Jesus, or you will procrastinate  
about believing in Him, until you stiffen your back,  
and harden your resistance against Him, refusing to  
place your faith in Him, & becoming indifferent  
toward Him instead.

In ch. 20, John writes this to you=> *“These [sign miracles] have  
been written that **you** may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of God; and that **believing** you may have **life** in His  
name”* (Jn 20:31).

I hope this text we’ve studied has caused you to believe in Jesus,  
and has strengthened your faith in Him.

**X’s turning water into wine manifested/revealed His glory as  
the Almighty, who ennobles everything He touches, and  
who blesses every soul who will look to Him by faith.**

He lifts up fallen human beings, making all things new in their  
hearts, making them fit to stand/rest in God’s presence, and  
introducing the wine of real joy into their lives.

Let us adore Him, bow our hearts low/reverently before Him,  
reach out to Him by faith, and glorify His blessed name.

**“Water to Wine” (Part 2)**  
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Text: John 2:6-11

**Jesus’ turning water into wine will set the stage for all of His other miracles in this Gospel by revealing their nature and purpose...**

\*1. This miracle, like all His miracles, was a [18 selfless] act.

Acts 2:22

\*2. This miracle, like all the others, would be a [18 blessing] to people.

I Pet 3:8

\*3. This miracle, like all Christ’s miracles, was an act of [22 compassion] to meet a pressing need.

Mt 15:32

\*4. This miracle, like all of Jesus’ miracles, demonstrated His love for the [14 common] man.

**The second half of this narrative about Jesus’ changing water into wine divides itself into three parts...**

**\* Jesus’ Commands**

5. Mary had just told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do; now He was about to start giving them [22 directions].

**[John 2:6]**

Mk 7:3-4

6. Why would John include this detail about the waterpots? John wanted us to gain some perspective of the huge dimensions of this 130 [14 gallon] miracle.

Rom 14:17

**[Verse 7]**

7. The servants could not have seen any reasonable connection between a wine shortage and filling waterpots with water; they filled them nonetheless—right up to the [10 brim].

**[Verse 8]**

8. Jesus hadn’t touched the waterpots, but there was the wine nonetheless simply because He, the Creator, had [14 willed] that there be wine.

Jn 9:7; 11:43; Mk 1:15

9. We learn from our text that we are to obey Christ's commands, and we are to do so wholeheartedly—"right up to the [10 brim]".

\* **The Headwaiter's Evaluation**

[Verses 9-10]

10. The headwaiter's evaluation of the wine gave independent confirmation that it was indeed wine and truly [20 good] wine.

11. The believer lives in the anticipation of the good wine Jesus is saving for him in the [14 future].

\* **John's Conclusion**

12. Jesus' first miracle was intended to "*manifest*" (to indirectly reveal) Christ's glory; it caused His disciples to [16 believe] in Him.

[Verse 11]

13. Jesus repeatedly confronted people with sign-miracles forcing them to make a [18 decision] about Him based on those signs.

Jn 2:23; 3:2; 6:2; 1:41; 2:23-25

14. Some people just made up their minds not to believe in Jesus' name in spite of the [18 evidence] of His sign-miracles.

Jn 12:37-38; Mt 11:20; Jn 20:31

15. Christ's turning water into wine manifested and revealed His glory as the Almighty, who ennobles everything He touches, and who blesses every soul who will look to Him by [12 faith].