

## THE GOOD WINE OF GOOD FRIDAY

John 2:1-11

Sometimes I want to call Good Friday, Black Friday, because it was so dark for Jesus. But today, we call it good because it's so good for us. We're reflecting on & celebrating His death for our sins on the cross, really something that was divinely calculated to occur at just the right time, on a heavenly timetable. It's the apex of human history and we want to talk about it tonight. I want to look at the significance of it.

To do that, let's turn to John chapter 2:1-11 where we come across what John the Gospel writer calls **Jesus' first sign, or public miracle**. And Jesus' miracles we know and have seen throughout our journey in the gospel of Mark, are more than just miracles. They're more than meets the eye because there's a spiritual lesson in the context, some over-arching principle that He wants us to understand through the miracle about Him and how to relate to Him or what He came to accomplish. There's something significant to learn from them. As Wiersbe said His miracles are "*sermons in action.*" And maybe extraordinarily so with His first public miracle. We studied this on Friday morning in our Men's Fellowship Group and thought I'd share it with you guys since it blessed us so much.

John 2:1-11 NLT

*"The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3 The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."*

*6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, 8 he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions. 9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10 "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!" 11 This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him."*

So the first thing I want to do is just reintroduce us to the gospel of John by noting his purpose in writing what he does. Actually he tells us very pointedly through a **purpose statement found in John 20:30-31** why he is writing what He is and why he includes certain things that the other gospel writers didn't. It's very intentional. *"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."* Whenever you see the words "so that" you should pay attention because it's "so that" is part of purpose statements.

John is making the **claim** that Jesus is the Son of God so that we might believe in Him and be saved. Up until our passage, **John made the claim in his prologue** (the first 18 verses of John) **that Jesus is God** (referring to Him as the Word) and He created the world. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things came into being through Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."* It's a very bold statement about Jesus' true identity.

And then in John 1:14 says, “*the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” So not only did **God create the world but then at a point in history, but actually stepped into it as a man and this man is Jesus Christ.**

So his prologue, John introduces to Jesus’ forerunner named John the baptizer who proclaimed Jesus’ coming and pointed people to Him and Jesus has started calling disciples to follow Him. Now in chapter 2 John introduces us **the first sign validating or proving** His claim Jesus is God in the flesh. Notice that in 2:11, “*This is the beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*” Jesus performed so many miracles and signs and did so many things that John himself said in the last verse of this gospel, “*I suppose that if everything Jesus did was written down the world itself wouldn’t contain the books that would be written.*” But in a nutshell, this sign he chose to record so that we would understand who Jesus is so that we might believe in Him and so be saved. He’s an evangelist just telling us what he’s seen and heard and witnessed and the significance of it all.

The account begins with, “*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.*” What does he mean by the third day? Well, if we rewind a bit and summarized we’d see 7 full days so far since “the beginning” of John 1:1’s “*in the beginning*” reflecting Genesis 1:1. First, he introduced the baptizer in **1:19-28** and that was one day. Then in **verse 29**, it was **the next day** (day 2) where Jesus was baptized. Then **the next day** (day 3) is introduced in **verse 35** and where a couple of John’s disciples follow Jesus. **Verse 43** also begins with “**the next day**” (day 4) when he called Philip and he blew the mind of Nathanael. And when you get to chapter 2 it’s **3 days later** and technically **the 7th day** which will be more significant in a bit.

But notice that Jesus is at a wedding. It’s a day of celebration and rest and fellowship and rejoicing. And Cana weddings were like a highlight of the year for folks. It was not one of these hour-long ceremonies like we have today but something that would last for days, they say a week. Those having the wedding may have saved for a lifetime for this. It was a big deal and **to run out of wine would have been a social disgrace.** They might even incur a **lawsuit** from an attendee if they ran out of wine. It would cost them financially and socially. It would just be an embarrassing disaster, adding to the shame of what is already probably a poorer couple who may have been relatives, though we’re not certain.

Then you have this interesting exchange here between Jesus and Mary (vv. 3-5). Mary comes to Jesus for a solution. And the question we ask is, “*Was she asking for a miracle from Jesus?*” Even though there’s no biblical evidence for Jesus doing miracles before this, it says it was the first of His signs, I think she is. I think she knows He’s special and He can provide. She hasn’t forgotten the words of the angel Gabriel that this Son was special. Or that she had conceived Him while still a virgin. Or that Herod tried to kill Him and they moved to Egypt because He’s a divine King. He’s the Messiah. But besides that, on a more practical level, He’s the oldest son in the family, and with many scholars believing Joseph has passed away by this point, it means she is looking to Him as the responsible one to fill in and help.

His response, “*Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.*” “*Woman*” sounds a bit harsh but really was a polite and tender term in the Greek. However, the talking about “*His hour*” is solidifies the whole statement and it comes across overall pretty firm. He’s setting some new standards. John’s idea of “the hour” throughout this gospel multiple times – the hour, the hour, the hour – is revealing to us that Jesus is operating on a heavenly timetable according to the Father’s will. His life is not random and is intentional. So this is kind of a firm word to His mother that He’s not under her authority now but must obey the Father fully. I think He’s also saying that as soon as He starts doing miracles, **things are**

**going to heat up!** There's no slowing down this train that ends with crucifixion. As one man said in our fellowship group, "*If He does this miracle, the cat's out of the bag!*"

**Verse 6:** "*Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.*" I wish I could've found a good picture of what these looked like. I've seen them in a documentary behind museum glass but these things are 20 or 30 gallons and if you want an idea of what that's like just think of your 20-30 gallon trash cans. These were huge, thick-walled stone jars. It'd take a lot of muscle to move them, and as it says, they were for **ritual washings**. They likely would've drawn water and washed the hands of every guest before & after meals. But Jesus has them **filled to the brim** with water, helping us understand nothing else could have been added. They weren't tampered with.

Starting in **verse 8** He has them take some to the headwaiter, basically the master of ceremonies, and at some point since filling them the water had been turned to wine and not just any wine. It was a **highly superior quality of wine!** Obviously God's wine is going to be better than man's. But notice the headwaiter makes a big deal of how good it is. You want to add an exclamation point there to, "*You have kept the good wine until now!*" Most, he said, would serve a poorer wine after the senses were dulled because it's less expensive but God saves the best wine until the end. This becomes another small, but important detail indicating this sign was legitimate. It's superior wine. If it surprises you that Jesus turned water to wine, it's important to note that wine in the Bible is reflective of joy and celebration for God's provision. Drinking wine isn't in itself sinful, but drunkenness is, and the Bible warns against getting hooked on it because the sin nature does easily get hooked and it causes a lot of problems in our lives.

But now let's get to the fun stuff and understand here what is all going on from a **symbolic perspective**. And I feel like I need to say I would not treat every passage of Scripture like this one and we don't need to look for hidden messages in every detail or every number, but I do think John is bringing to our attention many symbolic elements in this miracle that signify what the ministry and mission of Jesus is all about and what really happened on that cross. Like I said, there's more than meets the eye. It's a sermon in action.

For one, John started his gospel like Genesis with, "*In the beginning*" and now it's the seventh day, a day of rest and rejoicing for God. It's like a new, little creation narrative or "new creation week". The first creation was perfect but has since fallen into sin and I think what John is alluding to is that Jesus is bringing about the redemption of it. He's bringing the new creation, making all things new, starting with His first coming to pay for sin on the cross.

Mankind in general, even Israel under the Law, under the Curse has been left feeling empty. No matter what we do and what we turn too outside of God, we're always left longing for something more to fill us and make us whole again. We don't want to die. We want a full & satisfying abundant life. New life. New beginnings. And for it not to be over when we die because of sin. Well, that's exactly what Jesus came to do, as He tells Nicodemus in the next chapter **He came so that we could be born again** and the woman at the well in chapter 4 whose been through several marriages trying to find satisfaction, He tells her she'll never thirst again if she takes of His living water that He can offer. She'll never thirst again, ever. So I think this whole thing is pointing to **New Creation that's going to come on the third day when He rises from the grave**. The use of the "third day" is like a dash of sugar to sweeten the text.

Also, one of the eschatological, or end times realities that those who are born again will experience is the marriage supper of the Lamb. We as the Church are the bride of Christ who will be joined to our husband who is Christ and we're going to feast with Him and drink real God-created wine in His kingdom in glorified

bodies. There's only one marriage in heaven and it's our "marriage" to Christ made possible by the cross of His grace.

The ritual washings under the Law are being replaced with something better, **the washing of regeneration that comes by His Spirit** and fills us when we're spiritually empty (like the empty pots). The endless works of the OT Law are about to be replaced with Christ's finished work on the cross where we'll worship in Spirit and truth, and it was all made possible by the blood that He shed and the death that He died. No amount of religious activity and washings can cleanse you. **Only the crimson & wine-colored blood of the Lamb can, as we just sang about.** You must be washed by the blood of Christ through faith in Him. **This is the good wine of Good Friday that sweetens our lives, making us new creations.**

I hope you see there's just a whole **New Covenant element** seen here, and replacing of the Old Covenant. He's brings a superior creation. A superior marriage. A superior washing. A superior wine to rejoice men's hearts through the New Covenant in His blood.

Only the cross can remove our disgrace as poor sinners. Only the cross can remove the shame of sin. Only He can fill us to the brim when we're empty. And what's great is that **just as they had drunk freely, so He offers this sweet spiritual wine to us, freely.** It's OT and NT talk to speak of water being offered freely, but listen to some of the last words our Bible's close with: Revelation 22:17, "*The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let anyone who hears this say, "Come." Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.*" (NLT) **The message is come and drink of the goodness and sweetness of Christ, and live!**

Folks, we are fallen bunch of sinners who deserve death. You know it and I know it. Death is the consequence for sin, both spiritual death and physical death. But **God offers us eternal life in Christ. A new, sweeter life made possible by His Spirit starting when you trust Him.** We're made new creations now, to be filled with joy on the inside and our lives sweetened. And will one day fully redeem us when He raises us as He was raised. The cross is what made all of this possible to be offered freely, as it satisfied God's wrath on sin for all who believe.

If you trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior, you will become a partaker of this awesome New Covenant. Let's celebrate that New Covenant in His blood by taking communion. As you reflect and come gather the elements, we're going to play a song by Aaron Shust called **Isaiah 53** and will partake together when it's over.