

Turning Water to Wine

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 2:1-11

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, He performed various miracles to demonstrate His divine power. The miracle we will discuss here was His first – turning water to wine at the wedding in Cana. As we study this miracle, it is important that we understand the context to appreciate how incredible it was. This miracle will teach us certain things about Jesus. It also provides an important lesson for us.

The Context

- The chapter starts with a time marker (“the third day”) – marking time since Jesus' public appearance when John the Baptist declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God (John 1:29); “the next day” John sent two of his disciples to follow Jesus (John 1:35-37); one was Andrew who found his brother Simon Peter (John 1:40-42); “the next day” Jesus found Philip (John 1:43-44) who then found Nathanael (John 1:45-51)
- Waterpots used for the “Jewish custom of purification” (John 2:6) – to wash before eating (cf. Mark 7:3-4)
- Note about “wine” – people spend a lot of time using this passage to defend/justify “social drinking” and miss the point; the Greek word could be used for alcoholic wine or non-alcoholic grape juice, the context must determine which it is; if this wine was alcoholic, it would justify much more than just “social drinking,” but drunkenness; drunkenness is clearly condemned (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; et al.); alcoholic wine will not fit
- Also, this was the “beginning” of the “signs” Jesus performed (John 2:11) – He was not doing miraculous things throughout His life up to this point; this was something new

The Miracle

- Jesus, His disciples, and His mother were guests at this wedding when the wine ran out (John 2:1-3) – initially it seemed like Jesus was not going to intervene (John 2:4); yet Mary advised the servants to do what He said (John 2:5); she believed He could fix the situation if He chose to do so
- The setting – six 20-30 gallon stone waterpots*; Jesus told the servants to fill them with water (John 2:6-7); Jesus did not physically do anything, He only directed the servants in what to do; the pots were filled to the brim, nothing else could have been added (ex: concentrated juice); Jesus told them to draw some out and take it to the headwaiter; they had to trust Him, not test it first
- The headwaiter saw the results, but did not know what happened (John 2:9-10) – better wine than before; what could have been an embarrassment for the family was now something remarkable to be praised; this shows us Jesus' divine power to do what would be impossible; not a trick; no way it could have been faked

- Jesus was still doing things in His time (cf. John 2:4) – not a big spectacle; He would reveal Himself fully in time; this was a public wedding, but only the servants knew what happened

The Lesson

- This began with a statement by Jesus' mother – “Whatever He says to you, do it” (John 2:5); this is what all of us are called to do as disciples (Matthew 28:19-20); whether the instruction makes sense to us or not, we must simply obey (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46)
- This miracle proved that Jesus is the one we should obey – Mary was not just some random mother who thought too highly of her son; Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29); He can change things by His will; He will save us from our sins if we will take what He has commanded and simply do it (Hebrews 5:9)

Conclusion

- Jesus did not burst only the scene amazing large crowds with His miracles – this one was witnessed by His disciples and a few servants
- Yet in this miracle we see His power to change things by His will – this gives us hope and calls us to obey

* “At the lowest estimate, about 120 gallons of wine would have been produced by the Lord’s miracle. Diluted, this would have produced some eight thousand four-ounce glasses. This was sufficient for several days of feasting.” (Truth Commentaries, John; Daniel H. King, Sr., p. 43)