

MESSAGE TEXT: John 2:1-11

MESSAGE TITLE: Master of the Feast<sup>1</sup>

I. NOW SHOW US YOUR GLORY

Our text for this morning is John 2:1-11,

**2 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."**

**6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.[a] 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. 9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.**

There is a scene in the Old Testament, in Exodus 33--- (CONTEXT AND TENT OF MEETING EXPLAINED- MOSES REQUESTS 3 THINGS OF GOD)

Verse 7--- **Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.**

Verse 11--- **Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.**

Context is a discouraged follower of God---Right after Mt Sinai when people worshipped idol

**V. 13- Lord, teach me your ways.**

**v. 14-15--- Lord, guaranty me your presence.**

**v. 18- Please, show me your glory.**

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<sup>1</sup> I was helped in forming my thoughts by Tim Keller's Sermon, Lord of the Vine, 11/17/1996.

At the end of his conversation with God Moses made a third request of God--- he said, **“Now show me your glory!”** (v. 18)

What does that mean?

John, in the opening chapter of His Gospel said, (1:14) **“And the Word [[[THAT IS JESUS]]] became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of Grace and Truth.”**

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY!

What that means is that all of God’s holiness, and perfection--- His excellence and worth and beauty were made visible and put on full display in the person of Jesus. In Jesus, the invisible God became visible so the naked eyes of men could behold His glory. This is what the author of Hebrews was communicating when he said (Hebrews 1:3), **The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His nature,**

And The very same Spirit, we are told in Ephesians 1: 18, who guided John in the writing of his Gospel, works in concert with those inspired words to open the eyes of our hearts to see God’s glory in the midst of them. You see, just because we were not there to see Jesus with our own eyes during the brief span of His earthly ministry does not mean that we missed out. Through the Holy Spirit, God can and He does open the eyes of the hearts of all who have put their trust in Jesus so that when we come to God’s word, we can see Jesus too through the inspired writings of the Bible.

In the final verse of our text for this morning (verse 11), we read, **“This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory.”** So the point of this miracle was to manifest His glory- which is to say to make visible how excellent and good and powerful He is.

And just as Moses trudged his way out to the tent of meeting weighed down and burdened by discouragement, defeat, failure and sin, and there pleaded with God to give Him a fresh vision of His glory--- a vision of God's goodness that would make his sufferings look small and his sacrifices worthwhile and his hope not unfounded. My sense is that many weeks some of you come into this place similarly burdened and with a similar need. Now, make no mistake, this building is not a sacred space in the same way that the tent of meeting was. During our sermon series on worship we wrestled with Jesus' words in John 4 where he makes it plain that God's people worship in Spirit and truth and that the sacred space that God inhabits is us, His people.

However, even so, I think it is true that often times when we gather together here the unspoken cry of many hearts is **"Now show me your glory!"** Help me to see!

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus**

**Look full in His wonderful face;**

**And the things of earth**

**Will grow strangely dim**

**In the light of his glory and grace**

THE POINT OF THIS SERMON SERIES IN WHICH WE WILL STUDY THE EIGHT MIRACULOUS SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

John very pointedly refers to the miracle that Jesus performs in our text for this morning a "sign," which means, of course, that this act of changing water into wine is meant by John, not as a meaningless display of power- but as a sign that was intended by Jesus to point us to deeper truths about who He is and why He came. In fact, I would go so far as to say this particular miracle is an acted out picture meant to represent or signify all that Jesus is and all that Christianity is.

John tells us that this is Jesus' very first sign or miracle that he performed, and maybe it strikes you as surprising that he didn't do something more dramatic or meaningful, according to our way of thinking, (I believe that this miracle is both dramatic and very, very meaningful, but at first blush it may not strike us so.)--- Elsewhere in the Gospels Jesus walks on water, restores a severed ear, commands the weather, heals horrible diseases, and even brings dead people back to life- but for His first sign He turned water into wine for people at a wedding.

What does this mean?

## **II. THE MEANING OF THIS SIGN**

I think as a sign, this miracle, is meant to answer two questions that someone might have about Jesus.

Who did he come to be?

And

What did he come to do? (CREDIT TIM KELLER- *Lord of the Vine*, 11/17/1996.)

### **A. WHO DID HE COME TO BE?**

First, let's tackle who he came to be. This first miracle worked by Jesus was to save a dying party by making 120-150 gallons of the best wine.

**And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it.**

**9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now."**

MASTER OF THE FEAST was like the designated LIFE-OF-THE-PARTY. (Master of ceremonies, Toast Master)

In this moment, Jesus shows himself to be the true Master of the Feast.

Isaiah 25:6-9,

**On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.**

**7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.**

**8 He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.**

**9 It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."**

Tim Keller points out that by making over a hundred gallons of the best wine in order to save a dying party Jesus is saying that he came "to bring festival joy," that's the phrase that Keller used in his commentary on this passage, and I like it. Jesus is fireworks and celebration and high-spirits not rule keeping.

I don't think most non-Christians see Jesus this way, but the greater tragedy is that so many "Christians" fail to understand this about their God. They don't see God as the Master of the feast, but more like the master of those drudging away in the kitchen. He is at best a kill joy and at worst a taskmaster.

But Jesus **is the Lord of the Feast**. He came to make the world run with wine. Again, in the words of Tim Keller, "He came to bring festival joy!" And if anyone here today doesn't see

him that way here today, you need to get alone with God, as did Moses, and plead with Him, "NOW SHOW ME YOUR GLORY. HELP ME TO SEE!"

That's part of why we are setting out to study the miracles of Jesus, because each is a sign, intended to manifest His glory and point us to deeper truths about who Jesus is and what he came to do. My prayer is that over the course of this sermon series you would fall even more in love with Jesus.

In one sense, those who have rejected Jesus on the basis that they will find deeper and longer lasting joy elsewhere have not truly rejected Jesus at all, but rather an imagined Jesus who is so much less than who He actually is. Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding feast in order to make it obvious and visible that he is beautiful, satisfying and excellent- that's what it means in verse 11 when it says that He did this to manifest His glory.

## **B. WHAT HE CAME TO DO**

This miracle is also a sign that answers the question of what Jesus came to do.

The Key to this thought is found in verse 4--- **When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."**

At first, Jesus' answer seems to have nothing to do with what Mary said about their being no more wine--- a total non-sequitur--- and he kind of comes off maybe as being a little brusque, even rude, to His Mom.

I used to think that when Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come," that he meant that the time had not yet come to begin doing these sort of miracles which would mark the start of His time of earthly ministry. So, perhaps, before I was inclined to interpret his answer to

Mary as Him chiding her for kind of forcing His hand, and by saying hour had not yet come, I thought he meant he was not yet ready to start doing these kinds of public miracles.

But I don't think that's what's going on here. Let's give Jesus some credit. He is God in the flesh after all. He could not have meant that it was not yet the Father's time for Him to start doing miracles and then just a few seconds later say, **"Oh, alright, I'll do it after all."**

No, when Jesus talks about His hour he is referencing the hour of his death. Essentially, what I think happens in this exchange is that Mary tells Jesus that they have run out of wine, and Jesus answers, "It's not my time to die yet." We don't have time to look up all these passages, and unpack each one this morning, but if we did we would go to 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 13:1, and you would see that every time Jesus speaks about His hour coming he is referring to the hour of his death when he would go to the cross, and this is the first such recorded instance in John.

ILLUSTRATION: When I was a young, single person I would go to weddings and during the ceremony and the celebration afterward I would think about my own wedding someday. I would think about what it would be like to stand in front of the church and say, "I do." And what it would be like to have a woman say "I do" to me. That's a natural thing for a young single person to do, and Jesus' comment here about the hour of his death betrays the fact, I think, that he is thinking about his wedding, and the bitter cup he will have to drink in order to provide wine at his own wedding feast.

Again there are far too many passages for us to go explore if I wanted to make this argument exhaustively, but throughout the Old Testament, God refers to Himself as the bridegroom of His people. **"Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband." (Jer 3:14, NIV)**

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It is not surprising then that Jesus who is, according to Hebrews 1:3 , the exact representation of God the Father, thinks of the relationship between Him and His church as that of a bride and bridegroom.

**John 3:26-29--- 26 And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.” 27 John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.**

#### **Revelation 19:6-9**

**6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.**

**7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;**

**8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.**

**9 And the angel said[a] to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”**

Jesus was looking ahead to the consummation of all consummations, when he would be joined to his bride in a perfect indissoluble union- the ultimate embrace—the ultimate



celebratory feast. He is thinking about the truth that the only way that he was going to be able to be united with His bride is to go through the hour of His death.

If there is any doubt that this is what Jesus was thinking- look at the way in which he chooses to work the miracle.

6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

Rites of purification- before going into the temple they would ritually wash before going into the presence of God- this was a sign- it signified that they were sinners and their very being was polluted with moral impurities and we cannot be embraced by God unless we have been cleansed of all our impurities.

At the last supper he held the cup of wine and said "This is my blood." Jesus sees this wine and thinks of his blood.

His blood is what will cleanse us.

Jesus is thinking about what it will take to give his bride the cup of joy and gladness and what it will take is that he must drink the bitter cup of the cross. Matthew 26:39--- **And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."**

Hebrews 12:2--- **2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Tim Keller- *"John 2:1-11 paints for us a picture of Jesus at this wedding feast sitting in the midst of joy sipping from the coming sorrow, so that we can sit in the midst of sorrow sipping from the coming joy."*

When we talk about God as a King or a Shepherd or a father that tells us not just something of who God is but also who we are in relationship to Him.

When we understand Jesus as the bridegroom and ourselves as the bride of Christ- it means that we are chosen, we are loved, we are provided for, we are joined to Jesus in a happy, forever union, He is for us, and no matter what sins you have committed you have been washed cleaned, clothed in His righteousness and His church is perfectly lovely to Him.

At the end of the story the human bridegroom at the wedding is given credit for what Jesus did, and that too is a picture of what it is to be a Christian. This bridegroom blew it. He messed it up. Jesus fixed the problem. **2 Cor. 5:21--- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

By virtue of Jesus fixing our problem, becoming sin in our place, we become the righteousness of God. You see, in becoming a Christian, Jesus didn't just take something from you, your sin, he also gave you something, His righteousness. It's as though we too have been given the credit for what Jesus did, and that's not dishonest because it is Jesus' earnest desire that his bride be dressed in righteousness when she comes down the aisle on the day of the wedding.