

John 2:1-11 "The Rest of the Story"

JOH 2:1-11 "On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 9 and 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 10 and 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." 11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him."

If you were with us last week you'll remember that this was our text then as well. Last week we examined the historical context of this first miracle of Jesus. This week we want to look at the spiritual significance of this event and miracle.

Now, granted whenever we come to God's word we need to be careful not to read into it more than what God intends or teaches. We can take a passage and over spiritualize it in such a way where we lose any semblance of the original intent.

But it should also be pointed out in this passage that the Holy Spirit is recording, through the pen of the apostle John, the very beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. Up to this point Jesus has been dealing with His disciples in a private manner. His ministry has been primarily directed to them, not the public.

Here however, that is all going to change. And what we find here in our text is significant in that the Lord is using this particular event and miracle to announce, through common elements, the entire plan of God to atone for the sins of mankind.

The words and phrases the Holy Spirit uses to announce this plan in this event are to be noted and examined in such a way as to

bring out the richness of our salvation found in the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world.

The first thing we notice in our text is that this miracle of turning water into wine is taking place at a wedding. It is not a coincidence that a wedding is the coming together of a man and a woman in a covenantal relationship where the two become one, and that our Lord uses this very relationship to describe His being united to His people.

In fact, Jesus would use this marriage relationship to describe the Kingdom of God and how Israel had been invited but refused to participate in this wedding celebration.

MAT 22:2-6 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. 4 "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' 5 "But they paid no attention and went off - one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them."

This of course is a spiritual parable of how the Jews rejected the King who was celebrating His Son as He invited Israel to be a part of this celebration of life and a new beginning.

John the Baptist understood this relationship between the bride and bridegroom as he makes the point that Jesus is the bridegroom coming for His bride.

JOH 3:29-30 "The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. 30 He must become greater; I must become less."

John the Baptist compares himself to the attendant of the bridegroom who is full of joy when the bridegroom arrives. Jesus arrives on the scene and through His baptism is now anointed by the Father in an official way as He is set on a course of redeeming His bride.

And as we view this wedding at Cana one cannot but be struck with the conspicuous parallel between Christ, the bridegroom and

His church, the bride, and what a celebration this is meant to be as the two come together forever. The apostle John expresses his joy over this relationship in the book of Revelation.

REV 19:7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready."

REV 21:2-5 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

REV 21:9-10 "One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

What's interesting in Re.21:9-10 is that the angel makes it clear that he is going to show John the bride, and yet what does he show John? He shows John the Holy City, the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.

Whatever else this New Jerusalem is, as the angel describes its dimensions and its great and high walls and its twelve gates, it must be pointed out that this New Jerusalem is also a living entity.

And this is not unusual language since the word church in our vernacular can mean both a building and a people. And so, we might speak to each other about how each of us in Christ make up the church, but this Lord's Day we go to church, or we go down the street to the local church to meet.

John clearly says in Rev.21:9-10 ... "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

A living bride cannot be the equivalent of an inanimate object such as a city any more than the true church on earth is simply a building we meet in on Sunday mornings. One can describe the other, but one is not exactly the same as the other. You and I are the bride of Christ beautifully adorned as a beautiful city constructed by God.

But our relationship with Christ is a relationship which is to be intimate and loving and is seen, in one sense, in the marriage relationship between a man and a woman.

2CO 11:2 "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."

In fact, this description of God's people being a bride and God being their bridegroom is not only a New Testament teaching. We find the same description of Israel and God in the Old Testament.

ISA 62:5 "As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you."

JER 2:32 "Does a maiden forget her jewelry, a bride her wedding ornaments? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number."

In reference to the Lord restoring Israel, and here this is a future reference to the Israel of God in Gal.6:16, the church, He says this to them in the book of Hosea.

HOS 2:19-20 "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. 20 I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD."

And so, Jesus is at the center of this wedding feast at Cana as He gives it meaning and context in light of Him being the bridegroom who gives life and meaning in the broader context of a wedding with us, His people, being His bride.

This is the relationship our Lord wants with all of His people by faith in Christ. So, we move from the wedding to the next key word we find in our text which is wine. Mary, the mother of Jesus makes the statement to Him, "They have no more wine."

As we saw last week wine was something to express the joy of an occasion. It is described in Scripture on certain occasions as making the heart glad.

PSA 104:14-15 "He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate - bringing forth food from the earth: 15 wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart."

PSA 23:5-6 "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

The flip side to this, where wine is substituted for God, is also seen in such passages as found in the Proverbs of Solomon who gives wise counsel.

PRO 20:1 "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise."

PRO 23:31-35 "Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! 32 In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. 33 Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. 34 You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. 35 "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"

But as wine relates to a celebration of marriage, as found in our text, the implication is that it makes the heart glad and by extension the whole idea of this celebration in Christ is that He makes our hearts glad.

As believers in Christ we must find our joy and gladness in Him even as David did and expresses throughout the Psalms.

PSA 9:2 "I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High."

PSA 32:11 Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart! 33:1 Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

PSA 40:16 "But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say, "The LORD be exalted!"

We as people naturally want life to be a good experience. We prefer gladness over sadness and distress. We want to live life in joy rather than in misery and grief. Why do you think people do the things they do in trying to attain happiness and gladness as they perceive it?

They think they can find joy and gladness in the things of this world and yet as Jesus says, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, (as though that will make him happy), yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (MAT 16:26)

For the believer we struggle with the same things. We also prefer joy and gladness. But unlike the world we have the One who is supposed to be our joy. This is why Paul stresses that the things of this world cannot satisfy us, nor please God.

EPH 5:18 "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."

The contrast here is how the world tries to attain to such joy and where true joy is to be found only in Christ as we walk in the Spirit.

But the wine Jesus is dealing with in our text goes beyond the mere means of joy and gladness. The wine in John 2 is a wine which speaks of a new life that Luke records for us.

LUK 5:36-39 "He told them this parable: "No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. 37 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. 38 No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"

There is old wine and there is new wine. The old wine Jesus refers to is the old wine of the Old Covenant, and the new wine of the New Covenant. We hear about this each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

1CO 11:25 "In the same way, after supper he took the cup, (the wine), saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And yet, for those who are used to drinking the old wine and are content with it will not want the new wine which is what Jesus was saying in LUK 5:39 "And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"

For the Jews of His day the old wine was the law they were used to and were content with. When told that He was their new wine, their new life, they simply didn't want it; that is, Christ.

And to show how He is the new wine, Mary points out to Jesus that the old wine is gone. There is therefore now a need for new wine. And as Christ arrives on the scene there in Cana, the old has been put aside, the old order of things is going to be swept away, and the new is about to take center stage and celebrated.

JOH 2:6 "Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons."

Why do you think John goes out of his way to describe what kind of water jars these are? These are the kind of water jars used by the Jews for ceremonial washing. What ceremonial washing? The kind of ceremonial washing that is associated with the Levitical law. In other words they represent the Old Covenant.

Jesus comes along and commands that these empty ceremonial water jars be used for an entirely different purpose. What is the implication here? The implication is that Christ and only Christ can legitimately change the function of one thing into something different.

Christ and only Christ can put aside the law in favor of something new. In this case, He uses the old ceremonial water pots as a reference to what will become new. How doesn't improve on the old, He literally replaces it. Water to wine; the law to life in the shed blood of Christ.

**Hebrews 7:17-19** <sup>17</sup> For it is attested *of Him*, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." <sup>18</sup> For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness <sup>19</sup> (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there

is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

What was once ceremonial, according to the law, as a representation of washing, will be transformed to what the ceremonial always pointed to; the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world.

Wine was not the place for a ceremonial water jar. But Jesus doesn't begin His public ministry without a clear indication of why He came into this world; to redeem His bride through the blood of the Lamb. Once again, it is not a coincidence we're at a wedding and the water is turned into wine, that which speaks of Christ's blood shed for His bride.

JOH 2:8 "Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,..."

Who is the master of the banquet who presides over the entire celebration? He is the one who has the final word on how things will be arranged and who also has the final word on what is good and what is bad.

From a spiritual standpoint, who is the master of the banquet, the master who determines how things will be done and who determines what is good and what is bad, what is acceptable and what is unacceptable?

Let me give you a hint. It's the One who determined that what Jesus did was good and pleasing. Keeping the context of John the Baptist's ministry in mind as it is associated with Jesus we read this.

MAT 3:16-17 "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

It is the Father who presides over His Son's work. It is the Father who sent the Son of God into this world. It is the Father who determines how our salvation will take place and who determines how the Son pleases the Father with His work.

The Father will taste, if you will, the work of Christ's substitutionary death, by the shedding of Jesus's blood on our



behalf, and He will determine how good it is in its efficacy. The wine at the wedding feast at Cana represents Christ's blood which is the New Covenant in His blood.

The master of the banquet has determined it is the best. And who does the master of the banquet go to commend for this new and marvelous wine? He goes to the bridegroom.

JOH 2:9-10 "and 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 and 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."

Who is responsible for paying for this wedding celebration? In Jewish culture it was often times the groom. He not only would pay the parents of the bride with a sum of money often called a dowry, but he would sometimes put up money for the festivities. This is why the master of the banquet in our text commends the bridegroom for the best wine saved for last.

With Christ being the bridegroom of His people He literally pays the entire price for the celebration in His own blood. He takes common water which normally would have been used for washing purposes according to Levitical law, and transforms it into something new and better, making the old obsolete.

**Hebrews 8:13** <sup>13</sup> When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

And by transforming the water into wine Jesus is making a clear statement that the old things have passed away as it relates to the law's involvement in the life of Israel. The true washing is the result, not of water which only cleanses the outside, but the blood represented in the wine, which cleanses the heart and creates new life, making us new creations in Christ.

The writer of Hebrews points this out as he shows the contrast between plain water and the pure water which cleanses from sin.

HEB 10:22 "let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."

In reference to the Lord turning the hearts of His people, (as depicted in the nation of Israel), from idolatry to Himself, as He places a new heart in each of us, the Prophet Ezekiel records these words of God.

EZE 36:24-27 "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

This is a cleansing only God can do. The law cannot accomplish this for Israel or us. And though this cleansing will require Jesus Christ to shed His blood and die for our sins, it is meant to be a joyous thing, not only because it will bring us the joy of the Lord as we have been reconciled back to the Father, but a joy for Christ as well, as to what His sacrifice will accomplish for us.

HEB 12:2 "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The Mosaic law was a wine which may have satisfied many, but when not understood as to its proper role it became intoxicating and deceptive and put people in a stupor whereby they were not wise in their estimation of the new wine which was saved for last.

They were content with the old wine to where they didn't want the new. Jesus has come to Israel first and has clearly shown them how He is the new wine which is the best. Since they have rejected this new wine, this new life has been graciously extended to the Gentile world as well.

Christ Jesus isn't simply the best, He is the only way. There is no second best. That's what distinguishes best from better or good as men perceive it. The world would suggest that their way to God is pretty good. Others will say their way is better than others, but only God Himself can give us the best.

You and I, when we were outside of Christ, may have had a good way to get to God as we understood things. But the best we have to offer to God is seen as nothing short of filthy rags in His sight. We

were dead in our trespasses and sins, but Christ has made us alive. We have received the best even as did the prodigal son.

LUK 15:22-24 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

We need to celebrate this life in Christ that we receive by faith in Him alone even as the angels do on our behalf. Jesus points this out in a parable.

LUK 15:8-10 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

God Himself joins in the joy of having one more child of His come home.

EZE 18:23 "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?"

Jesus has made the way home for us. It is His wine of joy in His very life we should be celebrating everyday of our lives as we look forward to that celebration before the throne of God we touched on in the very beginning of this study.

REV 19:7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready."

JOH 2:11 "This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him."

How has Christ revealed His glory today? He reveals it through the miracle of new birth where He takes the hearts of sinners bent on destruction and opens their eyes as they now can see their need and reach out to the one who is the new wine of our joy, our gladness.

And He continues to reveal His glory in and through our lives as this new life in Christ is manifest in such a way where people know that we have seen the face of God in a very real way as we come to Him and receive this gift of eternal life through faith in Christ alone.

We need to celebrate this life every day, not by being drunk with wine as the world is so inclined to do but, by walking in the Spirit to the glory of God as His life is seen in us.

COL 3:15-17 "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."