

The Lord's Message: Jesus' First Miracle

Date: January 23, 2022

Where: Tilghman UMC

Scripture Reference: John 2:1-11

In this Season of Epiphany, we are continuing to learn more about the manifestation of Jesus. We have learned that Jesus is not king of the Jews or king of the Gentiles, but King of All. Last Sunday, we learned that God confirmed Jesus as His Son. We also learned that we are all loved by God and that if we believe in Jesus, then we are all one in the family of God. There is still this nagging question of what evidence we have that Jesus is God's Son. Many a detective will tell you to follow the evidence to the truth. This morning, we are going to follow the evidence.

Let us pray.

What is that old saying about a wedding, "something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue." After having officiated wedding ceremonies for over 16 years, I would like to add: "something will go wrong." The flower girl or ring bearer will not make it down the aisle, but stop and run back to their parents. The groom will almost pass out from anxiety. The bride and groom will have their first fight at the altar on who should hold the handkerchief that was soiled with the bride's running nose. It will most likely rain on outside weddings. If your wedding reception is held at a youth camp, be warned that the staff may help themselves the night before to the food. Outside weddings held in the late evenings of the Summer bring bugs to drive you up a wall. The bride will decide to get dressed at her mother's house, which is two hours away. When she finally arrives, she is drunk from drinking champagne in the limousine. The wedding certificate says that you need to be married in one county, but the location of the church is in another county. You have a photographer that insists on getting the best shot, even if it means standing right behind the pastor and clicking endlessly in the pastor's ear or trying to standing in the center aisle right in front of the bride and groom during the ceremony. You name it. I could write a book on it.

Weddings are joyous occasions, but they are also filled with much worrying and angst. During pre-marriage counseling sessions, I always ask how are the preparations. I always tell them to keep the main thing (God bringing both of you together as one) the main thing. There is no perfect wedding.

From the readings today, that would hold true even in Jesus' day. Jesus, his mother, and his disciples are all invited a wedding in Cana. Now a wedding in Jesus' day lasted a week. Evidence of this fact is found in **Genesis 29:21-27 and Judges 14:10-12**. From scripture the weddings were not held from just a few hours in one day, but lasted for a week. This was the highest form of hospitality. Everyone from near and far were invited. It was considered very rude not to go. In **Luke 14: 15-21**, Jesus tells this parable about a king that is having a great banquet, but people are refusing to come. This is a sign of huge disrespect for the king.

Can you imagine trying to have all this food and drink prepared to care for all these people for a week? To run out of food or drink would be a great embarrassment for the bridegroom and his family. I can hear it now, "remember the time that Josiah ran out of wine during his wedding feast." Mary, sensing all of this, says to Jesus (**John 2:3**). There is this brief exchange between Mary and Jesus in verse 4 where Jesus tells her that it is no concern of his. In verse 5, the mother always knows her child, she tells the servants to do what he says.

The first part of showing hospitality in Jesus' day was to wash the dust or caked on mud from the feet of the guests as they arrived. There was always in the front area of the yard large stone jars that held water for washing the guests' feet. The Bible tells us that each was capable of holding between twenty to thirty gallons of water.

These jars had already been used to wash the guests' feet, so they were down a considerable amount. In verse 7, Jesus says to fill them. The servants do as instructed. They draw out some of the water that has now been turned in wine and bring it to the master of the banquet. In verse 10, he responds with you have saved the best wine last.

No one except Mary, His disciples and the servants had any idea of the miracle that Jesus performed. Everyone else thought that this is exceptional wine that was held back by the bridegroom. Neither Jesus, nor His disciples, nor the servants, saying anything to correct this viewpoint.

So, why does Jesus perform the miracle? Jesus does not ask for any credit. Jesus does not receive any credit. Was Jesus concerned about the disgrace that the bridegroom and his family would receive? One commentary that I read suggested that Jesus did this to protect the life of the master of the banquet. It is his responsibility to make sure that there is plenty of food and drink for this occasion. Maybe that is true, but I do not think that is the reason that Jesus perform this miracle. Was it because Mary told Him to do it? After all Jesus was obedient to God's laws. Jesus was obedient and honored his mother. As a matter of fact, Jesus says in **Matthew 5:17-20**. I do not think that is the case. Yes, we should follow God's laws.

I would say that there are three reasons why Jesus performed the miracles.

The first reason is to show compassion and meet human need. In **Luke 5:12-13**, Jesus encounters a man with leprosy. God did not stage this to happen. In this life there is a lot of suffering and pain. The miracle is the result of the intersection between God's love and human suffering. God is deeply affected by our pain and suffering. That is why God sent Jesus. Jesus, as God in the flesh, experienced our pain and suffering. This is not the world that God wanted it to be when God created the world. After God created the world, God says the world is good. The pain and suffering in this world came into being with our disobedience to God. This disobedience is called sin. I sin. You sin. Everyone sins. Paul says in **Romans 8:18-22**. God is not immune to our pain and suffering. God is filled with compassion for us. So much that God sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus performed miracles to show God's compassion for us. Miracles are still happening today.

The second reason was to affirm his true identity as the Son of God. That is what we are told in this passage of scripture in **John 2:11**. Only God can perform miracles. The miracles are signs pointing us to God's Son, Jesus. In **Acts 2:22**, the miracles are accredited by God about Jesus. Earlier in the Book of John, Jesus has just selected His disciples to follow Him. These disciples are going to be with Jesus for three years. They are going to leave their families and business. They are going to be ridiculed. They are going to face death. Jesus knows after the three years that they are going to have to lead the church. What better way for them to put their complete faith in Jesus then by witnessing the miracles.

The third reason is to provide us with a glimpse of the new world. All the miracles that Jesus performed relieve people of their pain and suffering. In **Matthew 4:23-25**, Jesus is healing great crowds of people from pain and suffering. In the new world that God will create, there will be no more pain and suffering. Look at **Revelation 21:4**.

Let's review three reasons for Jesus to perform miracles: to show God's compassion for the pain and suffering in this broken world, to affirm Jesus identity as the Son of God, and to provide us a glimpse of the future world.

Pain and suffering are going to happen in this world. Miracles happen every day. That is why we need Jesus. Let me just caution us that by believing in Jesus does not mean that we are not going to suffer pain. It does not also mean that by believing in Jesus that Jesus is going to heal us or our loved ones. The healing may come from leaving this world and going to the new world that God would create. A world of no more pain and suffering.

Everything has to begin somewhere. Jesus performed His first miracle on earth at Cana by changing water into wine. A simple miracle, but one that revealed of more to come. This is the evidence that we have that Jesus is the Son of God. The evidence points to the truth. Jesus is the Son of God. We can put our faith in Him. Amen.