

John 2:1-12  
Isaiah 25  
Psalm 23

“Do Whatever He Tells You”

March 29, 2020

In Isaiah 25, the prophet tells us that the LORD is preparing a feast for all peoples!  
A feast of rich food – a feast of well-aged wine.

What is that feast all about?

Well, we read Isaiah 25 a few months ago at the end of our Revelation series –  
because Isaiah 25 is all about the Wedding Supper of the Lamb,  
when God “will swallow up on this mountain the covering  
that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.”

What is that veil? What is that covering that is cast over all of us?

“He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces...”

In this day of fear and anxiety – we are reminded again of our mortality.

The wages of sin is death –  
and none of us will escape that!

But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!  
And the LORD of Hosts is preparing a feast on this mountain.

Our Psalm of response is Psalm 23 –  
The LORD is my shepherd.

In times of trouble – even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
the deep, dark valley –  
yet I will fear no evil –  
why?

Because *you are with me!*

Sing Psalm 23  
Read John 2:1-12

Some pastors preach special sermons for moments of crisis.  
Others keep preaching the same sermon series during a crisis.

There have been times when I have preached special sermons (once or twice...) –  
and I would have been very willing to do so in this case –  
except as I looked at our text in John 2,  
it seemed to be *exactly* what we need to hear right now!

The shelves are bare – supplies are running out –  
and Mary says to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

That’s what we need to hear!

When you believe in Jesus, the proper response to any situation is:  
“Do whatever he tells you.”

Trust him.

Humble yourself before him.

Do you know who Jesus is?

He is the Word who was God – and the Word who was with God.  
He is the one by whom and for whom all things were created.

He *knows* what he is doing!

In chapter 1, John told us:

In the beginning was the Word.

And the Word was with God.

And the Word was God.

And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us;

And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,  
full of grace and truth.

And now in chapter 2, what is the first sign that Jesus does to reveal his glory?

(Notice verse 11 – “and manifested his glory”!!!)

What is the first thing that Jesus does that shows us who he is?

He turns water to wine.

On the third day.

### **1. “On the Third Day” – A Wedding and the Resurrection (v1-2)**

*On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.*

<sup>2</sup> *Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.*

Why does John include this little tidbit?

Why does he say "on the third day there was a wedding..."

The entire Gospel of John is oriented around the various feasts of the Jews.

Every event is connected either to a Sabbath, a Passover, or some other feast.

This first event is no exception.

If you look at the time sequence in chapters 1-2,  
there is an entire week given.

1:19-28 give the first day’s events.

1:29 says “the next day” (day two)  
1:35 gives us day three,  
1:43 gives us day four,  
and then 2:1 takes us to day seven.  
But rather than say “on the seventh day,”  
John says, “on the third day.”

Because the point of this sign is not the Sabbath, but the resurrection.  
John 1-2 is setting forth the coming of the new creation.  
1:1 connects us to Genesis 1—“In the beginning was the Word”  
And on the seventh day of John’s gospel,  
Jesus reveals the beginning of his signs.  
On the third day, Jesus reveals the promise of the resurrection.

Why do I call this a promise of resurrection?  
Jesus simply turns water into wine.  
What does this have to do with the resurrection?

In Isaiah 25:6-9 we heard about the promise of a feast of salvation:  
a feast with the finest meats, and the best wines;  
a feast that the Lord of hosts makes for all people.

This feast is connected with his triumph over death,  
and the salvation that God will bring to all peoples.  
This feast is the day of rejoicing in his salvation.

The wedding at Cana is a picture of that day.  
Jesus is about to begin his public ministry.  
And he begins with a picture of where he will end.  
Where does the work of Christ end?  
Does it end at the cross? (no)  
Does it end when he ascends into heaven? (no)  
(because he sat down at the Father’s right hand –  
in order that might *rule* over all things!  
That’s part of his work!)  
When does it end?  
The work of Christ ends at the wedding feast of the Lamb.  
And just as his work will end at a wedding feast,  
so also it began at a wedding feast.

John's gospel will end with the resurrection of Christ--"on the third day."  
And the transformation of water to wine is a picture of his death and resurrection.

Why does he say on the *third day*?  
Look down at v19, Jesus says,

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"

Both these events are placed together for a reason:

John told us in chapter 1 that Jesus Christ IS the eternal Word of God.

He is not only true God, but he is also true man.

He is the Word made flesh

And John declares that

"we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father"

How did they see his glory?

As verse 11 says:

this is how Jesus manifested his glory – by turning water into wine.

So let's listen to this story together!

## **2. "They Have No Wine" – A Mother and Her Son (v3-5)**

<sup>3</sup> *When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."* <sup>4</sup> *And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."* <sup>5</sup> *His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."*

They are at the wedding – and the wine runs out.

I don't care whether you are in first century Judea or 21<sup>st</sup> century America –  
if you are at a big party, and the *wine runs out* –  
that is a catastrophe!

It would be worse than running out of toilet paper!

The two halves of chapter two fit together:

Both when he turns water into wine and when he declares himself to be the temple,  
Jesus is declaring that he is transforming the Old into the New.

He transforms water into wine;

He transforms the temple into his own body.

The Old is like water.

Water is good.

Water is necessary for life.

But who would serve water at a wedding feast?

Who would serve water in a time of rejoicing?

Jesus goes to the wedding,

his mother discovers that they have run out of wine.

This is tragic!

After all, a wedding is a time of rejoicing and celebration!

The bridegroom was supposed to supply the wine for his wedding,

so that everyone could join in his rejoicing and happiness.  
To run out of wine at a wedding is like running out of joy and happiness.

Psalm 104 speaks of how God gave wine to make glad the heart of man.

The Bible regularly condemns drunkenness.

But wine is a good gift of God.

Used properly, wine “makes glad the heart.”

Your use of wine should bring joy to your heart –  
and to the heart of your neighbors!

Drunkenness, on the other hand, makes *everyone* miserable.

I should explain a little of what these weddings were like.

Family and friends would gather from all over.

They would get together and celebrate for several days.

We have these short little receptions that are over in a couple hours.

They would party for days!

Well, at this particular wedding,

they didn't plan too well.

The bridegroom didn't have enough wine.

When Mary--Jesus' mother--hears about this,

she comes to Jesus and tells him that they have no wine.

Note Jesus' response:

“What does this have to do with me?”

In modern English: “So what?”

Why should I do something about it?

This is not my hour:

this is not my wedding!

In John's gospel Jesus' *hour* particularly refers to his death.

The *cross* will be Jesus' hour!

So then WHY does Jesus do it?

If it is NOT his hour, then why does he turn the water into wine.

And throughout John's gospel,

Jesus will frequently give something of a rebuke –

but then, if the person responds in faith,

he will do what they ask.

Here he rebukes his mother –

but then, when she responds in faith,

he does what she asks.

Notice her faith:

“Do whatever he tells you.”  
She doesn’t know what Jesus will do.  
But she tells the servants:  
“Do whatever he tells you.”

It’s the faith of Daniel’s three friends:  
“even if our God doesn’t save us, we will not bow down to your idol!”

If all Jesus says is “go back and do your job” –  
well, then go back and do your job.

Do we trust Jesus like that in the face of Covid-19?  
Will we *trust him* – will we *do whatever he tells you*?

### 3. “Fill the Jars with Water” – The Old and the New (v6-10)

<sup>6</sup> Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. <sup>9</sup> 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 <sup>10</sup> 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.”

If you want to understand the picture, watch what Jesus *does*.

What water does he use?  
Does he simply go to the well and have them draw water?  
No.  
Does he take their drinking water and turn it to wine?  
No.  
He tells them to fill the purification jars.

These are *not* drinking jars.  
These are huge stone jars used for ceremonial washings.

This water would have been used for the ceremonial washings  
that the Law required of the Jews to remove uncleanness

Each of these jars could hold 20-30 gallons.  
They would have been there to provide for anyone who had become “unclean”  
so that they could cleanse themselves

Telling the servants to fill them with water means that the servants need to go to the well

and draw around 150 gallons of water.

And you can't carry a huge stone jar to the well!

You have to get your little 2-3 gallon bucket and go back and forth 50 times to the well!

“Do whatever he tells you.”

Sometimes, Jesus tells you to do things that don't seem to make much sense.

Jesus, we need some wine.

Okay, go get 150 gallons of water and fill these six stone jars.

Um, Jesus, how about we just go to town and buy some more wine?!

No, go get 150 gallons of water and fill these six stone jars.

Um, Jesus, we could just order this on Amazon.com and make it snappy!!

No, go get 150 gallons of water and fill these six stone jars.

Jesus rarely tells you to do the thing that seems most logical.

What is Jesus doing?

Jesus is manifesting his glory (v11).

He turns water into wine as a picture of what he will do

1) in his death

2) and when he hosts the wedding feast of the lamb.

He takes the old water of purification,

and turns it into the wine of rejoicing.

What does this mean?

The water was used to wash away uncleanness.

Hebrews 9:6-10 tells us that the Old Testament rituals were

"symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered

which cannot make him who performed the service

perfect in regard to the conscience

--concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings,

and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation."

But Jesus came, Hebrews tells us, to purify us with his own blood!

And so Jesus takes the OT water of purification and turns it into wine.

What washes away our uncleanness?

As our children sing:

"What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus"

Only the blood of Jesus Christ can remove our sins.

Here Jesus is giving us a picture of his death.

The water of purification,

becomes the wine of rejoicing,  
as a picture of his shed blood which purifies us from sin,  
and enables us to rejoice in his death.  
Jesus is saying, no longer will you need water to make you clean.  
My blood will cleanse you from your sins.

Notice also that he doesn't just give them a little wine.  
He gives them more than 120 gallons of wine!!!!  
Why?

Jesus is giving us a picture of how HE will provide for his wedding!  
His death has infinite power.  
His blood can wash away every single sin you've ever committed.

No matter what you have done!

In the Lord's Supper Jesus says that the wine is his blood.

The wine of his love is so potent,  
that if you drink of him, you will never die.  
As Jesus says in John 6:54,  
"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life"

Jesus is announcing that he is the heavenly bridegroom:  
This poor schmuck of a bridegroom ran out of wine for his wedding!  
Jesus, our heavenly bridegroom, will never run out of wine!!!!  
His blood will ALWAYS be sufficient to remove our sin,  
and give us joy in his presence.  
The joy and happiness that comes from being married to him  
will never run out!

Notice that here the wedding supper of the Lamb and the death of Christ come together.

Does that sound odd?  
Does it seem strange that the image of Christ's blood (the wine)  
should be blended with the image of joy and happiness in the wedding feast?  
Maybe.

But John's gospel often does this.  
John wants us to see the glory in the death of Christ.

Usually we think of the resurrection and ascension as the glory of Christ's life  
But John wants us to understand that the pre-eminent moment of glory  
was also the pre-eminent moment of suffering.  
We usually think of glory in terms of beauty and holiness and light.  
And that is true.

But glory may also be found in suffering.  
Jesus understood this:

when he instituted the Lord's Supper he said that  
"this cup is the new covenant in my blood."

He also said:

"I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it with you  
in the Kingdom of God."

The wine that we drink in the Lord's Supper is a picture of Christ's death;  
but it is also a picture of his coming in glory.

In the Lord's Supper we participate in his death,  
and we anticipate his returning again.

And the wine of the Supper shows us both aspects of this:  
as a picture of his blood, it is red;  
as a picture of his return, it warms the heart.

That's part of why Jesus used regular, alcoholic wine at the Lord's Supper.

Wine shows forth not only the redness of his blood;

but the alcohol also reflects the joy that comes with Christ's return.

In scripture, wine is the beverage of choice for times of celebration.

And by turning water into wine that Jesus manifested his glory:

as a picture that his blood would wash away our uncleanness and sin  
--not the Old Testament rituals of purification.

This is a picture of the wedding feast of the lamb,  
where he would be the bridegroom

whose wine would give eternal life and joy to all of his guests.

Because one day we will sit at the wedding feast of the Lamb.

And our Savior, Jesus Christ,

will take the cup of blessing--the wine of rejoicing--  
and HE will drink it together with us!

Do you really believe that?

Do you really believe that you will one day stand before Christ in glorified bodies,  
and that you will really share in that great wedding supper?

Do you really believe that your life right here and right now is a daily dying to self,  
taking up your cross, and following Jesus--suffering with him--  
so that one day you might be raised with him?

Then let's live like it!

Let's *do whatever he tells you!*

Why do you still chase after those sins and temptations  
that you KNOW you should resist?

Why don't you keep your heart and mind fixed upon Jesus Christ--  
where he is seated at the right hand of the Father?

And when you fail....when you do sin,

why don't you repent?  
why don't you turn immediately to Christ and beg his forgiveness,  
and plead for the Holy Spirit  
to conform you more and more to the image of Christ?

**4. “His Disciples Believed in Him” – The First of His Signs (v11-12)**

<sup>11</sup> *This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.*

<sup>12</sup> *After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers<sup>[b]</sup> and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.*

Notice what happens when Jesus does this – at Cana in Galilee –  
notice what happens when he *manifests his glory*.

When Jesus manifested his glory in turning the water to wine,  
his disciples believed in Him.

They knew that he was the Son of God.

Sure, they still had a lot to learn--but they knew that if they wanted eternal life,  
they had to follow him.

Yes, you and I still have a lot to learn,  
but if you want eternal life,

you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ:

You must be purified with the blood of Christ,

and you must share in the wedding feast of the Lamb.