

John 2:1-11

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

⁶Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

John 2:1-11, 2015

John's Gospel is known as the gospel of signs.

Near the end of his gospel John says this:

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”

In Chapter 4 Jesus returns to the scene of our story today and cures a royal official's son as a sign so that the man would believe.

In chapter 5 He heals a man who lay in the portico at a healing pool in Jerusalem by simply telling him to get up and walk.

In chapter 6 Jesus multiplies a couple of loaves of bread to feed 5,000, and walks on the water across the Sea of Galilee.

In chapter 9 He spits on the ground, makes some mud and spreads it on a man's eyes to cure him,
and in the final sign that Jesus is the Messiah He raises Lazarus from the dead.

But in our story today we hear about Jesus' first sign as He changes roughly 150 gallons of water into wine.

He is at a wedding feast and during the proceedings the wine runs out.

That is what all of us remember about the story, but there is more to it than that,

There is deeper meaning than is on the surface.

To get to that meaning we have to know a little of the setting, the context.

First off Cana was a small village out side of Nazareth, which wasn't that big itself.

Weddings would last for days and the groom's families had a responsibility to hospitality for the guests.

And besides, running out of wine was more than an inconvenience.

Wine was not merely a social lubricant that kept the party going,

but a sign of the harvest, a sign of God's blessing, abundance, joy, gladness and hospitality.

Jesus was providing more than wine for the guests to drink

He was saving this family's reputation in the community and the hurt and humiliation they would suffer otherwise..

This is the place and time Jesus' disciples got their first glimpse of his glory,

not in the Temple in Jerusalem or a huge feast where the rich and famous walk the red carpet and celebrate their own glory,

but in the humble setting of a home in a little village where everyone knew everyone else and you get to see God's glory.

In the process he shows us a couple of things about himself.

- Jesus apparently liked a party every now and then. Having a good time is not a bad thing.

He shows us He didn't believe that life nor religion should be without joy.

- He brought God into ordinary settings and things of life, the home, a place where still only His best was good enough.

Jesus is showing us what grace is like.

This is the first sign; a disaster in the making salvaged by Jesus' abundant grace.

The other signs are similar.

You have a man who is terrified that his son will die if Jesus does not intervene. Jesus says to the man,

“Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe,” and he told the man to go home, his son would live,
and the boy did.

Another man who lays in the portico of the healing pools only feet away from changing his life and no one will help him get into the pool to receive the healing he so desperately needed.

Jesus commands him to stand up and walk. No healing pools were needed;

Thousands of hungry people who have made the trip to see and listen to Jesus are without food to eat,
and He multiplies a couple of fish and loaves of bread into enough to feed them all

Disciples on the Sea of Galilee terrified that their boat will be swamped by the high waves and Jesus walked up and stilled the water and brought them safely to shore;

And a man blind from birth about whom the disciples wonder, was it his parents or he himself who sinned causing his blindness. Jesus says it was neither;
and he gave the man sight.

Finally there was Jesus' friend Lazarus who had died. Jesus comes to Lazarus' sisters Mary and Martha who are in great distress.

"I am the resurrection and the life," Jesus says to them. "Do you believe me?"

He calls Lazarus out of the tomb.

Jesus is showing us what grace is like in these signs.

What is grace like in your life, in your home, among your family and friends, in your illness or the illness of your loved one?

What is grace like in your hunger, your fear, at the graveside?

When you watch a man or woman sit at their spouse's bedside for days and weeks hoping against hope that they will survive, living on their faith in Jesus Christ,

There you see what grace is.
When a family gathers around the internment sight of their loved
one commending them to God's care and trusting God to give
them strength to go on with only their memories,
there you see what grace is.

When you see the face of a new born baby and the face of a
single mom, at times terrified and a little tired,
but mostly overjoyed with this new part of herself,
There you see what grace is.

When you see the hand of the church reach out to those in need
giving food, shelter and clothes you see what grace is.

When you gather at this table to receive the body and blood of
the one who shows us what grace is,
and receive forgiveness for all you sins,
the power of His spirit and promise of life forever,

As you see the crucified Jesus hanging on a cross,
There you see what grace is.

Jesus' first act is to provide more wine, joy, and blessing than
this young couple or any couple could possibly have imagined
or deserved.

That is what grace is.

It isn't about only making up for something we lack, but also
providing more than we had ever imagined or deserved

That is what grace is, and that is what Jesus has done, continues
to do and will always do for you. Amen