**Sermon John 2:1-11 – 16/1/22**

**Videolink:** [**https://youtu.be/RiHRzn19f\_o**](https://youtu.be/RiHRzn19f_o)

When people get married, they usually want everything to go well. The groom knows he needs to arrive in plenty of time, the bride can be a little late but not too late. The best man cannot forget the rings. Afterwards at the reception, certain things need be right and that includes the food and the drinks. If you are supplying the drinks at your reception then you cannot run out, because people will not be impressed and worse still, people will remember. For years afterwards, when people talk about your wedding there would still be some who would say, “Oh. Wasn’t that the wedding where they ran out of drinks?”

That was about to happen to the bridegroom at a wedding in Cana. Everyone was in the middle of celebrating, enjoying themselves, eating and drinking, and the drinks had run out. Back in those days wedding celebrations were a much bigger affair than they are for most of us in Australia. Wedding celebrations could go on for days, even a whole week. If the drinks ran out people were not going to be very impressed. The drinks were the bridegroom’s responsibility and he had messed up. The guests were not going to be happy; the bride and her family were not going to be happy. Everyone would be talking about this wedding for years to come.

It just so happens Jesus and his mother and his new disciples were attending this wedding. Most of the guests may not even have been aware of Jesus’ presence, but the Son of God was there right in the very midst of the celebration. It makes you wonder, often do we also not realise that Jesus is with us? The Son of God was there but he wasn’t going to be the topic of conversation, people were going to talk about the lack of wine.

Jesus’ mother knew enough about her son to know he could help, and she had enough faith in her son to be sure he would help. She simply says to Jesus, ‘They have no more wine’ (John 2:3). This isn’t the right time for Jesus to start performing miracles and he tells his mother so, but she knows the heart of her son and she knows his heart’s desire is to help people in need. Mary simply then directs the servants to follow Jesus’ instructions.

Jesus responds even though it isn’t yet his time to be drawing attention to himself. Jesus puts aside any personal inconvenience, perhaps even changes his plans, to come to the assistance of someone in need. He tells the servants to fill six stone jars with water, draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet. The master tastes the water which has been turned to the very best quality wine. He calls the bridegroom and reminds him that etiquette says this choice wine should have been served first and not this far into the celebrations. A rather minor problem compared to having no wine at all.

Jesus has saved the bridegroom from a major embarrassment and has made sure only the servants know the truth. No one else including the master of the banquet has any idea Jesus has turned water into wine. The wedding banquet continued on, everyone was able to continue their joyful celebrations not aware that it was only because of Jesus that they were able to do so.

When you think about all the things Jesus did to help people, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, even raising people from the dead, turning water into wine seems to be out of place, almost frivolous. Yet this is the very first of Jesus’ miracles in the gospel of John. John doesn’t call them miracles, he calls them signs, because they point us to Jesus. They tell us who Jesus is and why he has come.

What does this sign tell us about Jesus?

What is interesting is the magnitude of this sign. Six water jars each holding around 100 litres, over 600 litres of water turned into wine. That is over 800 bottles of wine. Did they really need that much wine? Surely not. Why be so extravagant? Not only is the amount extravagant but the wine is of top-shelf quality. An abundant quantity of excellent quality wine, to fill the hearts of every single guest at the wedding with an abundance of joy and gladness. Jesus’ extravagant miracle of changing the water into wine is a sign of his abundant generosity and his desire that we experience life in all its fullness.

But there is more.

In the Old Testament wine is frequently used as a symbol of the joy and celebration associated with salvation. Amos speaks of the restoration of God’s people and the day when “the mountains shall drip sweet wine**.**and all the hills shall flow with it,” (Amos 9:13). Isaiah speaks of the feast that God will prepare, “a feast of rich food for all people, a banquet of aged wine … the finest of wines” (Isaiah 25:6). The abundance of fine wine is a symbol of the abundance of joy that awaits not only Israel, but all peoples on the day of God’s salvation.

When Jesus turned the water to wine it wasn’t yet his time for the greatest miracle of all, the miracle of his death and resurrection bringing salvation for all peoples, even though the wine in this miracle is a sign of that salvation.

Whenever you think of wine and think of Jesus you can’t help but remember that Jesus has established another banquet. A banquet where we are served by Jesus, the bridegroom of God’s people. A banquet where, in, with and under the wine, we receive the blood of our Lord, given and shed for us for the forgiveness of sins. A banquet where we receive all that Jesus has done for us on the cross. A banquet where we receive the grace of our Lord, and with that grace forgiveness, life, and salvation. This banquet which we will celebrate again today is a foretaste of the eternal banquet that we all look forward to. It is a sign pointing us to the life Jesus is preparing for us A new life that tastes like good food and wine. A new life where your heart is full of joy and gladness.

**Amen.**

Pastor Rolf Lungwitz