

Just Old Water Pots
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
October 17, 2021

Text: John 2:1-11

Purpose: Jesus' first sign in the Book of John was held at wedding at Cana. Jesus was asked by His mother to help fix their problem of "no wine." Jesus turned ordinary water, in ordinary stone or clay pots, into wine – the best wine! God can turn our lives that are ordinary and fill them with the word of God and transform our lives to ones that are filled with joy overflowing.

After the benediction, the pastor planned to call down a couple for a brief wedding ceremony in front of the congregation. Because his mind was so preoccupied with what he was saying during his sermon, for the life of him, the pastor could not remember the names of the couple he was supposed to marry.



So, he said, "Will those wanting to get married please come to the front of the church?"

Immediately, nine single ladies, three widows, four widowers, and six single men stepped to the front of the church.

Last week, we looked at the prologue of the Book of John. We learned that Jesus was with God in the beginning. That Jesus is God. That God came in the flesh to live and dwell among us. God came as the light to light up the world. John moves from the idea of Jesus being the light to the idea of Jesus being the lamb.



We were introduced to John the Baptist in chapter one. John the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus. John began preaching repentance to Israel. He preached against the wickedness of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He preached against the corruption. He preached against sin. He called for repentance. Many questioned him, repeatedly as to who he was.

Was John the messiah that they had been waiting for? NO
Was John Elijah that had come back? NO
John said he was one crying in the wilderness. He was not the light of the world, only one that testified of the light.

Even though the Book of John does not record the Baptism of Jesus, it appears to have occurred between verses 34-35. In the other gospels, we find that John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God prior to his baptism. In John's account, Jesus enters the scene, and John the Baptist calls Jesus the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Up to this point, the world had never seen one lamb that would take away everyone's sin. In Genesis one lamb covered one person. In Exodus, one lamb covered a family from the death angel the night of Passover.

In the temple, in the Holy of Holies, the High Priest would offer one lamb, one perfect lamb's blood as an atonement for the sins of the nation for a year. But John the Baptist said that this one Lamb, Jesus would forever take away our sin. Powerful!!

The Call of the Disciples

The Book of John continues to unfold the story of the various disciples that were called to join Jesus. We see Andrew was once a follower of John the Baptist and he began to follow Jesus (1:37-42). Andrew brought his brother Simon, later called Cephas or Peter to see Jesus (1:42). The next day Jesus found Philip and said to him, "*Follow me.*" - and he did! (1:43-46) Phillip went and found Nathanael to join them as they followed Jesus. (1:47-51) At this point, according to John the Apostle, we have one unnamed follower of John the Baptist, Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. These five or six disciples begin the journey with Jesus.



Three Ways we Come to God

Just briefly I will say, that this shows three ways we come to God. Andrew was the true seeker. He searched out God.

And when He found the answer, he brought others to Jesus. That is why we call him, "Andrew the Bringer."



Phillip came because another person cared enough about him to bring him to meet the Lord. Maybe someone brought you to God. It could have been your brother, sister, wife, or friend. They cared enough to bring you to a place where you could accept or reject God for yourself.

The third person is Nathaniel. God is the one that pursued Nathaniel. Maybe you have been running from God, but He continues to follow you wherever you go. You may want to run from God, but He is there with you. God has been described as the Hound of Heaven. He will pursue you until you accept or reject Him. He wants you to have the opportunity to enter into a restored relationship.

The Wedding Crisis

The first miracle or sign in the Book of John, is where Jesus turns the water into wine at a wedding in Cana. According to Dr. Robinson (Pulpit Commentary, John p. 81) the village was named Cana el Djelil which is seven miles northeast of Nazareth just beyond Sepphoris. I have visited Sepphoris twice and it is a beautiful area.



Many of the commentaries noted that when someone got married, it was not just a one-day event. It lasted for a week or more. People from the town, family and friends came and ate, drank and celebrated. A marriage was a special occasion. It involved everyone.

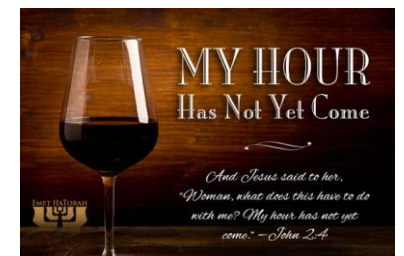
During that day, the water was not as pure as we have today in our homes. Wine was the accepted drink of the day. Some people speculate that wine during that day did not have the alcohol content that we have in our wines today. In some parts of the world, if you want something to drink that is not polluted, you need to drink wine.

Apparently, they ran short of the wine during this occasion. Some have implied that this would cause great embarrassment to the family hosting the party. Some have implied that Jesus' mother was a part of the hosting party. For what ever reason, Jesus' mother asks Jesus to intercede. Mary's name is not mentioned at all in the book of John. She is only referred to as Jesus' mother. One commentator suggested that maybe Mary wanted Jesus and his disciples to quietly leave and not add to the embarrassment of the family running out of wine. There was a crisis and Mary didn't want the family to be embarrassed.



Jesus's Hour Had Not Yet Come

When Mary brought this to Jesus' attention, He said, *"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."* When you first read Jesus' response to His mother, you may wonder why Jesus called her "woman." If you remember when Jesus was hanging on the cross, He referred to Mary as woman. It was then that Jesus turned the care and nurture of Mary over to the Apostle John.



Now that Jesus has begun His ministry, He has now moved into a different relationship with His family. If you will remember He once said, *“Who is my mother? Who is my brother? It is He who does the will of my Father.”* Jesus has now been baptized by John. He has spent 40 days in the wilderness. Now Jesus has begun drawing disciples to Himself.

If you think about Mary, the one that had received the angelic announcement of a miraculous birth, she KNEW exactly who Jesus was. I am sure she was anxious for Jesus to become who He was destined to become – the Messiah. Maybe Mary was trying to push Jesus into the public eye and to do something unusual or miraculous. Maybe Mary was hoping once Jesus’ ministry began to flourish, she would be vindicated for all the humiliation she must have endured becoming pregnant while being engaged.



You will find a common theme in the Book of John where Jesus repeatedly says over and over that *“My hour has not come.”* (2:4, 7:6, 7:8) It wasn’t until later, just prior to Jesus’ crucifixion that He confessed *“The hour has come.”* (13:23)

Mary’s Request of Jesus

But at this wedding, Jesus’ mother asked him to do something. I can just see Mary, exasperated at what Jesus said to her.



Mary simply turns to the servants and said, *“Whatever He says to you, do it.”* Jesus asked them to fill up these old beat-up pots that were standing in the corner. These were special pots used to hold water. Most likely they were ceremonial pots for cleansing. According to the NKJV, these pots held about 20 to 30 gallons of water each. All total, they were 120 to 180 gallons.

The KJV translation says these jars held two to three firkins apiece. A firkin measured the equivalent to 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ gallons. Or 17 to 25 gallons. According to this interpretation, if there were six jars, then we would have 100 to 150 gallons. That is a lot of wine!!!

I can see these old water pots standing in the corner. They are banged up. They may be chipped from being carried to the well every week. Maybe they were a little dirty and used. Jesus drew attention to them and asked that they be filled.

After they were filled, a dipper of water was given to the steward, he replied that this was the best wine he had tasted yet. Usually, the best wine was used first then later, the cheaper wine was brought out near the end of the celebration. But Jesus saved the best for last. Jesus always keeps the best for last. His gifts to us become sweeter every day. I think the older I get, the more I understand the phrase in Ecclesiastes 7:8, *“The end of a thing is better than the beginning.”* The wine Jesus brought to the wedding feast made it all the sweeter at the end. A life lived with Christ, is sweeter as the years go by.



Of all the signs that Jesus did, why did he choose this situation, this illustration, this time to begin to unveil his hour? The scripture tells us that this is His first sign. This clearly refutes some of the apocryphal writings that say Jesus turned clay pigeons into real ones when he was in Egypt. Turning the water into wine was his first sign. Mary knew that Jesus was special. She knew who He was. Maybe she wanted Him to reveal himself. Even though Jesus saved the day at the wedding, His hour still had not come.

Jesus wanted His disciples, at least five or six by now, to know that He was the new wine.

He was the one that would do the cleansing. He would be the one that would represent the new order of things to come. It was not just about water and wine. It was about a new cleansing that was to occur in the hearts of men and women. I am sure you have heard you cannot put new wine in old wineskins. Jesus came to establish a new order, a new way of relating to God.

We do not know how many people were attending this wedding celebration. I can surmise these stone jars filled with wine were more than enough to satisfy the people that had gathered. Just like Jesus taking five loaves and two fish and turning it into enough to feed 5000, this wine would have been more than enough for the occasion.

This was the first of Jesus' signs;
it was at Cana in Galilee;
He revealed his glory,
and his disciples
believed in him.

John summarizes this in verse 11, *“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”* This sign of turning water into wine caused the disciples to believe in Him.

A Spiritual Lesson for Us Today

Dr. J. Vernon McGee

summarized this passage of scripture like this.

There is a spiritual lesson for us today. Jesus uses us as water pots today.

We're just old beaten and battered water pots. We're not attractive and ought to be pushed to the side and covered up. But God wants to use us. He wants to fill us with water. The water of the word of God.

Then after He fills us up with the water of the word of God, he wants us to ladle it out. When we ladle out the word of God, it does what it is intended to do. For those listening, that word of God becomes like wine to the hearer. It becomes the wine of joy through the working of the Holy Spirit. We are told, *“And be not drunk with wine, therein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”* (Eph. 5:18) The Holy Spirit takes that water and preforms a miracle in the life of an individual. Simply hearing the word of God can transform a person's life.

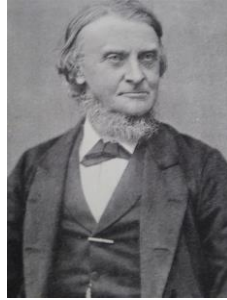
I am just an old water pot, pouring out the word of God to those that listen. As I ladle it out, it can become the wine of joy to those who receive it.

J Vernon McGee
1904 - 1988

Pastor
Theologian
Radio Broadcast Pioneer



Alexander Maclaren summarizes this passage in such an eloquent way.



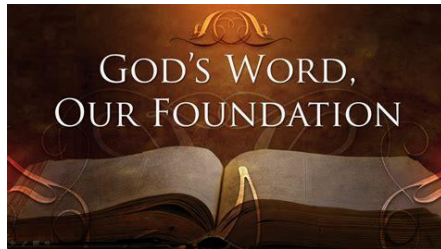
We have here a token of Jesus' glory as supplying the deficiencies of earthly sources. His mother said to Jesus, "They have no wine." The world's banquet runs out, Christ supplies an infinite gift. These water pots that stood there, once changed, contained far more than enough for this little company. The water that flowed from each came from the obedient servants' hands. Christ also will give to each of us, if we choose, a fountain that will spring unto life eternal.

When the world's platters are empty, and the world's cups are drained dry, He will feed and satisfy the immortal hunger and the blessed thirst of every spirit that longs for Him.

Do not search for the things of God from the world. The platter and cup offered by the world will not satisfy.

They only poison your soul and embitter your spirit to

the things of God. Take in the word of God, in doing so, you will find it grows within you to a joy unspeakable. It will lighten your heart with the knowledge that when we pass from this world into heaven, we will discover it to be so much better than we ever dreamed of and find the Lord has saved the best wine for that day.



LET US PRAY