

John 06 - New Covenant Demonstrated

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John 2:1-12

Previous Lesson of the Wedding

- Mary encouraged Jesus to inaugurate His Messiahship
 - Changing water into wine would demonstrate His power over the material to satisfy people's physical needs
 - Would by-pass the stauros glorifying the flesh thus tempting Him to do His will, and hers, but not Father's
- Christ rebuked her as His purpose was different; thus, she acquiesced, informing the slaves to obey Him now

Jewish Wedding Motif

- One must understand Hebraic customs to understand how Christ's first sign illustrated His Messiahship
 - Wedding determined how Christ would demonstrate difference between New Covenant the Old Covenant
 - Jews sought salvation through the Law but salvation was always apart from the Law (vs. 51, 66, 71)
 - Religions (works) always seek righteousness by works

Poor Prior Planning {P³}

- Wine was depleted by third day {completion} of the wedding with four more days yet to celebrate
 - Either invited too many guests or
 - Bought too little wine
- Mosaic Law never meant to last or bring life (Ro. 7:12)
 - Law fulfilled in Christ who came with the new covenant (Ga 4:1-7; Ep 1:7-10; He 8:8-13)

Not a Monetarily Poor Family

- The family had six large stone jars holding 20-30 gallons each for Jewish purification ceremonies
 - Expensive, hand hewn containers denoting wealth
 - Late invitation to Christ {disciples} denotes wealth
- Jews rich with in God's blessings but squandered them
 - Looked for a fleshly Messiah to reign now, not eternally

Limited Knowledge of Need

- Apparently only Mary and the slaves knew the problem
 - No indication leader of the feast knew wine was gone
 - Groom was in his chamber with wife, ignorant of issue
- Jews did not understand their ignorance-Self righteous
 - Exile taught them little of their true ignorance
 - They conducted empty rituals without understanding (Ma 1:1-30; Lk 1:12)

Outward Purification Rites

- The Pharisees especially followed oral traditions resulting in frequent water washings or purifications
(Mt 15:1-3, 23:23-33; Mk 7:1-8)
- This concentration on the outside neglected the inner spiritual cleansing that God's word accomplishes
- Such a large amount of water denotes a pious family but not necessarily a family seeking God's repentance

Law Was Not the Problem

- Christians oft think the Law was evil - Law was Good
 - Taught man of:
 - God's holiness
 - Man's sinfulness
 - Innocent sacrifice for sin so man could meet with God
 - Law pointed to Messiah as only He fulfilled the Law
 - His sinlessness under the Law confirmed by resurrection

Jewish Practice Was the Problem

- Jews believed they could meet the demands of the Law
 - Their entire practice aimed to satisfy the Law
 - Failing, they substituted the Talmud to be self-righteous
 - Their washings, tithings and sacrifices achieved nothing
 - Prophets, whom they killed, told them of their error
- Their stony vessels {bodies} were empty of spiritual water though they believed they were pleasing to God

Christ Demonstrates Grace

- Christ ordered slaves to fill these large jars with water (Jc 2:6-9, Jc 7:17-19)
 - His spiritual water is living, life changing
 - Fills the stony believer with His new life and goodness
- The changing of water into wine also foretold His death which we commemorate in the Eucharist (MR 14:24-25)
 - This showed Mary He was the cost of salvation

Slaves Take Wine to the Host

- Christ tells the slaves to take some of the fluid from the jar to the host to pronounce its acceptability
 - Only host could declare if it was fit for the celebration
 - He declares it to be better than previous wine
- Jews wanted the Law to make them righteous but it did not satisfy; Grace satisfies the soul by changing the nature; hence, new covenant

Meaning of the Change

- Quietly changing of water into wine was no mistake
 - Pointed to prophecy of God giving them His spirit (Ex 36:25-27)
 - He will pour His Spirit on all flesh (Jed 2:28-29, Ac 2:34)
 - Speaking of His New Covenant by Jeremiah (Jc 31:31-34)
 - Looks to their future restoration even today (2c 12:10-13:1)
 - The Spirit changes whom He wills unbidden (Jc 3:5-8)

Change Remains Hidden

- The stone jars were not changed, only their contents
 - During this life we remain in our fleshly bodies
 - Spiritually we are reborn into His image inwardly
 - We do not yet know the totality of our change (1Co 13:9-12)
- When He comes for His own in the air then we shall be like Him, changed in a moment (1Co 15:20-23, 42-50)

Old Acknowledges the New

- When the host announced the new wine good he was a metaphor for the Old rejoicing in the New Covenant (1Pe 7:18-22; 8:6-13)
 - Host calls the groom out of the chamber to praise him for the excellency of this new wine
 - Christ, as the groom of His bride, is forever praised for the excellency of His eternal salvation (1Pe 4: 22-14, 16-17)

Thus, the First Sign

- The reason this is the *first sign* to the Jews is because Jesus demonstrated
 - The New Covenant
 - Price of the New covenant
 - Inward change quietly at work in this life - Maturation (1Co 2:20-21)
- His Messiahship would not be about outward power but inward change - Rebirth into the kingdom of God

Disciples Believed

- John describes the reason Jesus performed this sign
(Mt 13:10-12)
 - Disciples and Mary saw what Jesus did and believed
 - Yet, I doubt they understood its full significance
 - The disciples frequently proclaimed Him as Messiah but were not cognizant of its full implications
 - Andrew proclaimed Him Messiah (Jo 1:40)
 - Peter declared Him Christ then Satan & Peter tested Him
(Mt 16:13-17, 21-23)

John's Multi-Faceted Purposes

- John's simple description plumbs the depths of
 - Jewish failure to understand their God and His grace in extending the Kingdom to them first
 - Contrasting the Old and New Covenants via simple imagery pointed them to the mission of Messiah
- This *first sign* does not end on a positive note though

All Go to Capernaum

- John closes this segment with the anticlimactic statement that believers and unbelievers travel to Capernaum
 - Jesus' brothers did not believe until His resurrection
 - They stayed a few days but John gives no details
- Signs do not save, only inform the informed; thus, we may stand in awe but people quickly forgot His sign

Fitting Into John's Hymn

- Christ demonstrates why He came - to bring the Light of the New Covenant to man; Jew first (Jn 1:11-13)
 - Most would not believe - John's Gospel shows oft this
 - Some would believe - Contrasts with other's unbelief
 - This constant tension would result in the self-righteous killing the righteous One (Picture of sacrifice)
 - His death purchases true life for evermore

We have Perspective of Time

- Christians can plumb the depths of John's reflective narrative because we have lived over 2,000 years under culture influenced by the Bible (True faith vs Religion)
 - We have the advantage of archeology during the past two hundred years also
 - We are indwelt by His Spirit, if saved, Who teaches us His truths (Jn 14:26)

Yet, Many Miss the Message

- Just as John ends this recounting anticlimatically, many Christians also move on without understanding
 - Lulled by the simplicity of John's description
 - Ignorant of Hebraic culture and the Old Testament
- He remains in the background as the Good slave of God - It isn't about Him but about the Father's will (Jn 10:57)