

“Water into Wine”
John 2:1-11
(Preached at Trinity, March 15, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we begin **Chapter 2** of the Gospel of John. It begins with the Greek word *καί* usually translated “and.” It is translated in the KJV & NAS 95. It tells us that there is a close connection with our previous chapter. **Verse 19** of **Chapter 1** began the first week of our Lord's ministry ending with the Wedding Feast at Cana.
 - A. It began with the delegation of Jews coming from Jerusalem to question John the Baptist regarding his identity. His answer:
John 1:23 NAS - "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."
 - B. **Verse 29** begins another day – The next day
Verse 35 begins another day John introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God.
John 1:35-36 NAU - "Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"
Peter and Andrew followed Him.
John 1:40-41 NAU - "One of the two who heard John *speak* and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah "
 - C. The next day Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel as His disciples.
John 1:43 NAU - "The next day He purposed to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."
 - D. As we enter **Chapter 2** John tells us that we are on the same day Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel – “*And* on the third day . . .”
2. As John introduces the wedding feast we are told several things.
 - A. It is in Cana of Galilee. Jesus has begun His Galilean ministry. Cana was an insignificant city about nine miles north of Nazareth. The entire ministry of Jesus took place within a relatively small area. From Jerusalem to Nazareth is about 120 miles. Jesus did His first miracle in a town that was remote from Jerusalem. It was not a public event. His purpose was not to attract a crowd.
 - B. The occasion was a wedding.
Weddings in the first-century were major events and could last as long as a week. The groom was usually responsible for the expenses of the wedding. During the night of the ceremony the groom and his friends would go to the bride's house and escort her and her attendants to the groom's house. We can see this in the Parable of the Virgins.
Matthew 25:6 NAU - "But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet *him*.'"

- C. The text tells us Mary “was there” in contrast to one who was “invited.” She seems closely connected to the wedding. On the guest list was Jesus with His newly called disciples. That both Mary and Jesus were there suggest that it might have been a wedding of relatives or friends of the family. The absence of Joseph implies that he was probably deceased.
- D. We also find indirectly Jesus affirming and giving His approval to the public wedding ceremony.
- E. Finally, we are told that this is the first of the miracles of Jesus—He changed water into wine. The wine was created, not from grapes and not from the normal fermenting process but from water. Jesus is the Creator. Some have doubted that this was a historical event. Others have tried to explain it away by suggesting that when the wine ran out Jesus commanded water to be used. We must take it at face value. Jesus changed the water into wine. It was so profound that it resulted in the belief of His disciples:
John 2:11 NAU - "and His disciples believed in Him."
3. Wine was served to celebrate the wedding. Wine was a staple drink during this period. Debate continues as to whether or not it was fermented wine or grape juice. In the warm climate juice would quickly ferment on its own. Evidence is weighty that fermented wine was the common drink.
- A. Jesus used the fermenting process to describe uniqueness of the New Covenant.
Matthew 9:17 NAU - "Nor do *people* put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."
Luke 5:39 NAU - "And no one, after drinking old *wine* wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good *enough*.'"
- B. There is little medicinal value to grape juice
Luke 10:33-34 NAU - "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, ³⁴ and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him."
1 Timothy 5:23 NAU - "No longer drink water *exclusively*, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments."
- C. There would be little need to warn of perspective deacons drinking too much grape juice.
1 Timothy 3:8 NAU - "Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain"
- D. The Bible often speaks of the drinking of wine in a positive sense.
Psalms 104:14-15 NAU - "He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the labor of man, So that he may bring forth food from the earth, ¹⁵ And wine which makes man's heart glad"
Jeremiah 31:12 NAU - "They will come and shout for joy on the height of Zion, And they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD-- Over the grain and the new wine and the oil"

- E. We must also note with great caution the warnings against drunkenness. The warnings cause us to ask ourselves carefully if we should partake.
Proverbs 23:31-32 NAU - "Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; ³² At the last it bites like a serpent And stings like a viper."
1 Corinthians 5:11 NAU - "But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one."
1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NAU - "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God."
4. The issue of liberty –
- a. We have the liberty to partake. The SBC policy cannot be pressed Biblically, but any organization can agree to certain policies of conduct.
 - b. Some Christians tend to glory in their liberty. It becomes an issue of pressing our rights which can be an outlet for sinful pride. We must always be willing to give up our rights.
 - c. The history of our church's position has been to urge extreme caution and always be willing to forego our rights.
 Trinity Constitution & By-Laws – "Due to the characteristics of today's society in which we must live, it is recommended that the Church member be particularly aware of his obligation to set an example of righteous living in the sensitive area of his sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage. Although abstinence is not a Biblical command, it is recommended in this specific area as a general statement of this church."
 - d. Because of the Biblical evidence for fermented wine, we have chosen to make it available for the Lord's Supper while maintaining the principle of Christian liberty.

Conclusion:

1. The fact that they have run out of wine is presented as a terrible predicament. It would have been a terribly embarrassing situation for the newlywed couple. Some commentators have suggested that they could actually be held liable for damages. First century weddings practiced a strict reciprocity between the host and guests bearing gifts. Mary comes to Jesus in an attempt to provide a solution to the crisis.
2. What we must not overlook is Jesus partaking in this celebration of joy. Although Jesus is referred to as "The Man of Sorrows" He also knew the importance of experiencing the joys of life. Next time we'll focus our attention on the joy of our Lord and the elements that should direct our understanding of Christian joy.