

Miracles 24-08-18b

We're picking up our study here of the first signed miracle in the gospel of John and the first in chronological order in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, which is the wedding feast of Cana, the turning of water into wine. We see the appearance of Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, and she hears from the lips of the Lord Jesus that his hour has not yet come, and this would seem to sound a discouraging note that, well, he's not going to do anything because the time is not right. But if you think about this, Mary feels a responsibility, and evidently she is responsible in some fashion because there is no one else endeavoring to solve this problem.

What would you do if you're throwing a party and you run short of something that you need? Maybe some unexpected guests show up, you don't have enough meat, you don't have enough chips, you don't have enough drinks, you don't have enough whatever. What does someone do? Someone will run out to get more ice or more of whatever it is that is needed, but at the point that they run out of wine, this seems to be a problem of Mary and Mary's oldest son to solve. There doesn't seem to be anyone else acting to solve this problem.

And a new thought I had in reflecting on this account, why is it they ran out of wine? If you plan for a proper number of guests and if you ration out what you have, you shouldn't run out, right? There was a failure somewhere. Somebody messed up or a delivery didn't happen. Maybe they had ordered some and the caravan didn't arrive or the cart spilled.

For whatever reason, this is unexpected. This is not what was planned. It is an unforeseen need.

And the miracle, the miraculous solution is also unexpected and unforeseen. So Jesus comes to Mary believing that he can do something about the problem. She doesn't specify what it is.

She just knows that he's probably going to need servants to help solve the problem. And so she places what she has at her disposal in the hands of the Lord Jesus. These servants are listening to her, are following her instructions.

So she gives instructions to the servants to place themselves at Jesus' disposal. So Mary knows what Jesus is talking about. We know this from the gospel of Luke back at the time that the birth of the Lord Jesus was announced to Mary in Luke 1, 46 through 55.

Remember, we have what's known as the Magnificat or the Song of Mary. And if you recall in Luke 1, this is what Mary composes on that occasion. Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

For he has regarded the lowly state of his maidservant. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed, forever.

Mary recognizes that God is a God of grace and compassion, of provision, of mercy, who fulfills his covenant promises, who is aware of and concerned about the lowly, who isn't impressed by the lofty, the rich. She understands a lot about the Messiah, about God in heaven, the God of Israel. And she has laid all this up in her heart and has pondered it.

And it is an ongoing part of her life. And 30 years later, she still remembers these truths. And she knows who her son is.

And that if she places this concern, trivial though it may seem in the scope of history and redemption and the salvific work of the Messiah for Israel and for the world, she's at a celebration and they've run out of wine. It might seem trivial by comparison, but she does not hesitate to go to the Lord Jesus and lay her concerns before him and to entrust him with that situation and its solution. She takes it to the Lord Jesus and leaves it there.

She puts what is at her disposal at his disposal. What are her resources at this point? She's got some servants who are willing to act at her behest. And so she puts those in Jesus' hands and she leaves.

She doesn't stick around. She doesn't act like the importunate widow and keep asking and asking. She gives it to the Lord Jesus.

She puts what is at her disposal at his disposal and she departs. And we don't see her again until the end of the story when they travel to Capernaum. So this is an example of what we've covered in other contexts that we do not have to engage in repetitive harangue of God about problems and needs.

We can take it to him, express our concern, let him know that we are willing to put whatever resources, efforts, and abilities that we have at his disposal and wait for him to move and to act and to guide. So this results in the focus shifting from Mary talking to Jesus and his response to Jesus talking to the servants and their response. So Jesus will tell his own disciples, do whatever whatsoever things I have commanded you.

Those that love me are those who do what I have commanded. And Jesus now speaks to

the servants. And this is also a phrase that occurs way back in Genesis chapter 41 when there is a famine in the land of Egypt.

And Pharaoh gives the problem to Joseph and says, Joseph, everything I have in Egypt is at your disposal. And Pharaoh tells his servants in Genesis 41, 55, after Joseph interprets the dream of the fat and lean cows and the ears of grain, Pharaoh tells his servants, whatever he says, do it. And Pharaoh steps out of the picture and lets Joseph handle it.

This is a great point of application for us. We recognize a problem. We look at what resources we have.

We dedicate them to God and place them at his disposal and wait for him to act, wait for him to lead and to guide, wait for him to provide. It doesn't take a lot of extended conversation, argumentation, repetition. So what does Jesus tell the disciples? I'm sorry, the servants in the presence of his disciples, they are watching this.

They are with him. I think they overhear this conversation. This is only recorded in the gospel of John because John is an eyewitness.

The other disciple present at the Jordan is very obviously by all accounts, John himself. So there were set there in verse six, six water pots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing 20 or 30 gallons a piece. It's very interesting.

They've done some archeological investigation in this region, trying to find Cana of Galilee because it no longer exists. There are a couple of different candidates. And there was an article in biblical archeology review some years ago where a gentleman went up and there is a place called Kirbet Cana, that is the traditional location.

But other people have said, no, that's not it. It's something else. But they went to Kirbet Cana and investigated and nearby there is a place of manufacture for stone water pots.

And they found the stone from which they make them and the tools that they use to make them. And these two archeologists were walking the ground and stumbled across a cave mouth, which they cleared away of, as he said, dirt, gravel, and goat droppings and found inside a four chambered cave. And in one area of the cave, it had obviously been dedicated to some form of worship.

There were crosses on the wall. There was plaster and gilding and some remnants of worship. And one of the things they found was a shelf on which were carved out resting places for six stone water pots.

This is just on the outskirts of Cana, Kirbet Cana. And two of the stone water pots were still there and four are not. And it is believed that as is so often the case, people who are interested in relics and splinters from the cross and so on, evidently once the circumstances of this miracle became known in later days, someone went and got the

water pots and took them inside to venerate them in this cave.

And two of them are still there. They are 20 to 30 gallons in capacity. They're made of stone.

They are obviously the design that was used for ritual purification, just as is described here. So there's a bit of archeological evidence early. The limestone, they were able to carve and date it and it is from the first few centuries of this era.

In any case, they are stone water pots. The Jews used stone because it could be ritually purified as opposed to clay pots or amphora as were used in the Greek and Roman world. The Jews for purification always used stone water pots.

And these are a lot harder to make because they have to be carved from solid blocks of stone. But there are plenty of surviving examples and replicas in museums and so on. And stone is representative.

It is from the earth. It is the material from which the altar was made in Old Testament days. You took uncut stones and made altars from it.

Cut stones became the tables of the law. And so stone is this unyielding material that in many ways is emblematic of the law. Paul talks about the new commandments, the way in which we now live is not written on tablets of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart.

But stone as an allusion or reminder of the inflexibility of the law and the need for the law. The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The law is a means of coming to the knowledge of sin.

By the law comes the knowledge of sin. The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. And so these stone water pots, by taking water that in its normal state is unchecked and uncontrolled, whether it is river water, whether it is well water deep in the ground and inaccessible, or whether it is the chaotic water on which the Holy Spirit presided and is a reminder of creation.

Remember John in this gospel in the preceding chapter has detailed the role of the Lord Jesus in creation. Without him nothing that was made was made. All things were made by him in verse 3. All things were made through him.

Without him nothing was made that was made. In him is life, and life was the light of men. The light shines in darkness.

The darkness did not comprehend it. And themes that are going to run throughout John's gospel and even into John's epistles about walking in the light, work while you have the light, the night is coming when no man can work, life and light intermingled, water as a

symbol of life, and harking back to the creation where out of water dry land appears, and life subsequently is created, and the Lord Jesus is intimately involved. So it is no accident.

Ask yourself this question. You're at the feast, they started out with wine, it has lasted up to a point, and now they've run out. So what do you have? In the modern day if this happened at a wedding celebration of people who used wine or champagne or whatever, what would you have laying around to indicate that you're out? Empties.

Empty bottles, empty jugs, empty boxes if you use the box version, but they're empty, right? So if you want more wine, what would be the logical human idea? Go fetch the empty wine skins, and then in the presence of the servants they refill, or go refill the wine skins with water, and then take to the feast. Why doesn't Jesus use wine skins? And they can be like the widow's crews of oil that Elisha takes care of over in I think it's 2nd Kings chapter 4. It could have been an infinite supply. The wine skins never deflate, they never run dry no matter how much wine you pour out of them.

There's a reason why Jesus employs these stone water pots that are there for ritual purification. This is the water. In the first chapter here we had John the Baptist baptizing with water.

The last half of chapter 1 is all about John baptizing at the Jordan with river water. There is fresh living water in this that is suitable for purification. It is contained, it is restrained, it is organized and made available for use by these stone water jugs.

These stone jugs. This is what the law did for Old Testament Israel. It took the power of God and made sanctification possible.

The means of approach to God, the means of worship, the means of becoming accepted, the means of cleansing. You think about the ritual of the cleansed leper in Leviticus 14. There is water and blood involved in that situation.

The consecration of Aaron's sons as priests. They are to wear clean linen robes. Those had to be washed in water to be clean and white.

Water is implied there in that case. Then there is the blood of sanctification on their earlobe and their thumb and their toe. In Ephesians 5, 25-27, when talking of husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church, that he might sanctify and purify her with the washing of water by the word.

And so the association of water with the word of God, whether it is the words of the law in the Old Testament or the words of the Lord Jesus and words he entrusted to the apostles in the new. Our sanctification comes through the word of God, initially delivered on stone tablets and now written on the fleshy tables of our hearts. But Christ loved the church and gave himself for her that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing

of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church.

And you have this wedding motif, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. This purification through the blood of Jesus Christ. And so you begin to see the value of water turning to wine and the association, the symbolic link of wine with blood.

This is throughout the scriptures. The first time you see it is Noah. Have you ever thought about this? Who's the most famous guy for water ever? It's Noah.

Who's the first guy to get biblically inebriated with wine? It's Noah. And so you have Noah combining the idea of water and the idea of wine. Water comes first and then the wine, but the wine is to excess and gets him in trouble.

And a result of that is a curse. There is a curse associated with that vineyard and wine incident. So you come down to Genesis 49 verse 11.

That of course is Genesis six and Genesis nine with Noah, Jacob and his prophetic blessing on Judah. Remember what he says in 49, 11 of Genesis, Judah will tether his donkey to a vine. This is a grape vine, his colt to the choicest branch.

He will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes, anticipating the lion of the tribe of Judah, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. You think of Exodus chapter seven, verses 14 and 15. What's the first sign miracle in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt? Moses takes his staff and what does he do? You can remember this in the movie, the 10 commandments, really cool, special effect.

What does Moses do? He takes his staff and he strikes the waters of the Nile. And what happens? The waters turn to blood, water to wine, water to blood. And what is this a harbinger and an anticipation of? The deliverance of Israel from slavery and bondage in Egypt, Egypt representing sin, the old way, the old life.

So Exodus seven, 14 and 15, the waters of the Nile. In Isaiah 63, verses two and three, the question is asked, why are your garments red like those of one treading the wine press? And the reply is, I have trodden the wine press alone from the nations. No one was with me.

I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath. Their blood spattered my garments and I stained all my clothing. The association of treading the wine press, wine and blood.

That again was Isaiah 63, two and three. In Joel 3, 13. And what are these pictures of? This wine can be a good thing.

The shedding of blood, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. But it also

speaks of judgment. Sin has to be judged and we have to avail ourselves of the grace of God who deflects judgment from us to a sacrifice or to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world through the shedding of His blood.

Hebrews 9, 22, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. So, as with so many things, it has a dual aspect. There is deliverance in and through the blood of Christ.

There is cleansing and sanctification. But there is also judgment. And the shedding of blood represents judgment.

But through judgment, God turns cursing to blessing. So, in Joel 3, 13, swing the sickle for the harvest is ripe. Come trample the grapes for the wine press is full and the vats overflow.

So great is their wickedness. And trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored is the classic picture of judgment. You find this in Revelation 14, verses 19 and 20.

The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes, and threw them into the great wine press of God's wrath. They were trampled in the wine press outside the city and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horse's bridles for a distance of 1600 stadia. Blood as high as the horse's bridles.

This is the blood of grapes representing judgment. But at the same time, you have this idea of atonement. So, in Leviticus 17, verse 11, the life of the flesh is in the blood.

I've given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls. The Lord Jesus here in this non-public, non-visible, almost secret miracle observed only by a few, portends, anticipates, foreshadows His very public work of redemption and atonement on the cross. Exodus 12, 13.

This, of course, is the first Passover. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are. When I see the blood, I will pass over you.

No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. Egypt is going to be judged, but those who have the sacrificial lamb's blood on their doorpost, no plague will touch the firstborn of those families. I've already quoted Hebrews 9.22. You also find Romans 3.25. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of His blood to be received by faith.

He did this to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance, in His patience, He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. The sentence had been suspended until the coming of Christ. Of course, you well remember 1 John 1.7. We walk in the light as He is in the light.

Remember the light that has been introduced in John 1. This is John writing in a letter, walking in the light as He is in the light. We have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. Of course, the most memorable example of this association of wine and blood, the blood of judgment, and the necessity to appropriate the results of that judgment on our own behalf, is the Last Supper, the upper room in Matthew 26, verses 27 and 28.

It's in Mark 14, 23 and 24. It's in Luke 22.20. This cup, which was wine, is the New Testament, the New Covenant in my blood. Drink ye all of it.

Interestingly, the blood that in Old Testament days was applied externally, was sprinkled to sanctify, to dedicate, here is internalized. And that anticipates the age in which we now live, where we want to internalize the work of Christ, internalize the Word of God, so that we are transformed in the inner man. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us and sanctifies us and makes us fit for every good work. This idea that was anticipated in Genesis 49.11, with Jacob's blessing on Judah, comes back in Revelation 5.9, those who sing the new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof. For thou wast slain, this is the old King James, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Redeemed us by your blood. The martyrs of Revelation 12.11, overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death. Overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, Revelation 12.11. Hebrews 13.12, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate.

You have the idea of washing your robes in the blood of the Lamb, in Revelation 7.14. John says, Who are these white-robed throngs surrounding the throne? John said to him, Sir, you know, this is Revelation 7.14, he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Supernatural, counterintuitive, until, you know, the recent days of fantastic detergents and spot removers, blood used to be one of the hardest things to get out of clothing. And yet here, blood is used to make robes spotless and white.

Obviously, a spiritual picture. In Revelation 22.14, blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. That's what you find in the King James and the New King James, but the better texts don't say, blessed are those who do his commandments.

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life. Wash their robes, and it harks back to 7.14. And if you don't have that correction in your New King James, you might want to write it in there. Blessed are those who wash

their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the city by the gates.

Water to wine, life-giving water turns into transformational, empowering, and sanctifying wine. So, Jesus chooses this method to solve the problem brought to him by his mother Mary, because of what it communicates. There was probably a source of water nearby.

The miracle happens because of three main things. First of all, Mary makes a request. Jesus might have observed that there was a lack of wine, but he acts at the point that there is a request made.

This is a reminder of the value of prayer, letting our requests be made known to God. Secondly, there are the presence of these jars dedicated to purification. This isn't some black sheep of the family.

They're not in a Roman household. This is an observant Jewish household, and these stone water pots dedicated to the ritual purification of observant Jews are at hand, and available for use. So, this is happening in the realm of faith and obedience, a household that has dedicated itself to keeping the law of Moses, and observing personal purification, and making it available to those who come to this celebration.

And thirdly, it hinges on the obedience of the servants. These are heavy water pots. They hold 20 to 30 gallons.

My recollection is one gallon of water weighs about nine pounds. Thirty gallons of water is 270 pounds. Even 20 gallons of water is 180 pounds, right? Nine times 20, am I right? 180 pounds.

So, these servants, there's going to have to be two or three of them hefting these full to the brim pots. Are they filling them at a well? Are they transporting smaller containers of water, and filling these things? There needs to have been a well nearby, and these servants have already filled these six water pots once. They were full when guests first started showing up.

They've been depleted by use, now they've got to go and fill them again. You can imagine grumbling servants, or, well, you know, I'm not going to follow the instructions of a woman. She's the one that said I had to obey this guy.

If the servants had flaked, and not been faithful and obedient, a miracle wouldn't have happened. So, these are reminders to us, in everything, with prayer and thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Place at God's disposal things that we might otherwise reserve to ourselves, and don't worry so much about the timing.

It's so interesting, you know, Jesus says my hour has not yet come, and yet Jesus is present, and he meets the needs of his family, both literal and spiritual. He's attending

this relative's wedding, I think it might have been his brother. He spends time with his mother, honoring his mother, this is the fifth commandment, honor your father and mother, along with his brothers in Capernaum.

John brackets Jesus' ministry with references to Mary. Remember, in John 19, she's going to be at the foot of the cross. Jesus cares about the details of our lives.

This is point of application number one. Jesus and his father in heaven care about even the small and seemingly insignificant things, and can convert the mundane and the ordinary and the immediate into those things that have eternal value. I am sure that Mary had no idea that this would become a part of the Word of God when she made this request, and that Jesus' response would communicate down through the ages to untold millions of believers about the caring and compassion and provision that God makes, even in ordinary small details.

So we are encouraged in this to bring our concerns, big or small, to God, trusting that he cares for us and is willing to provide for our needs. That's number one. Number two, the power of God is exercised through the Lord Jesus and converts the water to wine without human observation.

It is spontaneous, it is apparently unplanned, seemingly out of the proper time, not Jesus' hour. But think about this. We're going to see later on, remember the Syrophenician woman has a demon-possessed daughter and she comes to Jesus and he says, you know, the bread is only for the children at the table.

And she says, yes, but don't even the crumbs get licked up by the dogs? Jesus says it's not right to give the children's bread to dogs. And she says, yes, but can't they get the crumbs that fall? Jesus says, great is your faith. And although it is not the time for the Gentiles to receive the benefits of Jesus' presence and God's power, Jesus makes an exception in her case and drives the demons out of her daughter at a distance.

We'll see that. That's going to be miracle number 21. Think about the woman with the issue of blood by way of contrast.

She comes up behind Jesus and touches the hem of his garment. She could have been healed and have gone her way. And it would not have, it would have been another secret miracle that people didn't know about.

But that is a time where Jesus' hour has come and Jesus makes a gigantic issue out of her healing. And it is observed and known to the entire crowd. And that's a part of that wonderful sandwich miracle of the raising of Jairus' daughter.

And it's right in the middle. So many great details on that one, but that's something that happens without observation, but Jesus makes a point of making it public because his hour has come. In this case, not.

Even if it doesn't align with God's formal timing or our expectation, you think of Elisha and the widow's cruise, there's a famine in the land and it's judgment on the people of God. But here is this faithful widow with a child and Elisha creates an exception to the discipline and the judgment of God in those times. And so in second Kings chapter four, you have the flower that never runs out and the cruise that never runs dry.

It's an exception. The widow didn't say, well, it's time of judgment. I'm just going to have to suffer with everyone else.

She has a responsibility to herself and to her son. And she takes care of the needs of the prophet with the last of what she has. She recognizes the importance of God's prophet, God's communicator on the scene.

And by putting him first, God meets her needs. She's a great woman of faith and it's an exception. So we're encouraged to recognize God's timing, but to trust that God can make exceptions.

I believe there are times in the modern day where God does absolute miracles when they are needed. It's an exception to the generality that we're not in the age of the miraculous, but it is always the right moment for God's glory and our benefit. And God can choose what he is going to do for his glory and our benefit.

That's number two. Number three, this is accomplished by request and relies on the obedient compliance of the servants and these servants may already be tired of filling water jugs as heavy as they are. Number four, it benefits many who are unaware that this grace has been extended to them, that a miracle has been accomplished for their celebratory benefit.

It is a provision that enhances a joyous occasion, not to meet a basic need. It's not like the widow who is making her last few cakes. This is a celebration, but think about this.

This is the family of the Lord Jesus and God, the father and the Lord Jesus ensure that this faithful family full of believers, not the least of whom is Mary, the mother of the Lord are blessed and can celebrate without shame or embarrassment. Somebody dropped the ball. Something happened that they ran out of wine.

It shouldn't have happened, but it did. God fills that need over and above basic necessities. God provides for our blessing and our happiness, our celebration, our joy, and our peace beyond the basics.

And this is an example of that. It ensures a good day for the bridegroom and his family. And it also is the first of the seven signs that John says in chapter 20, verse 22 are written that we might believe and have life.

Notice at the end of this, these believing disciples who came to faith in Christ down at

the Jordan and have become his followers and have come up to Cana with him to this celebration. It manifested his glory in verse 11 and his disciples believed in him. They had already believed in him, but their belief is affirmed, confirmed, enhanced, given even greater foundation.

Remember when Jesus says to him who has more will be given to him who has not even what he has will be taken away. This is Matthew 13, 12, by the way, to him who has more will be given because they have made that step of faith because they have believed the word first. They are now having their faith confirmed with works.

This also anticipates in many ways, the wedding picture that we have in revelation chapter 20, and also what you see in the wedding feast parables that Jesus will communicate the importance of being acceptable, having the wedding garment coming at the invitation. But this is the earliest known miracle in Jesus career and his career is going to culminate in this new Jerusalem coming down like a bride adorned for her husband and the church as the body of Christ. The two shall become one flesh as it says in Genesis after Eve is created out of something taken from Adam.

We are participants in the covenant of grace by the blood of Christ and we partake of that identity and that anticipation of this is sort of the betrothal phase and we will enter into the fullness of union with Christ at that future point as you see in revelation 20 and following. Much of the transforming work of the power of God, this is the sixth point, is invisible to all but a few. Who gets to see this? Not the bridegroom, not the master of the feast, not even Mary herself.

Who observes the water turned to wine? Who knows that the water has been turned to wine and how it happened? The lowliest people present, if any of you would be prominent, serve. The greatest of you will be a servant and it is the servants who are fully aware, who see what nobody else at the feast sees. Only the guys who haul this water and fill these jugs in obedience see the miracle happen and how it happened and are conversing with the Lord Jesus in the process.

The servants have the best of this whole deal and they're working the hardest. Everybody else is celebrating. Number eight, faith in Jesus grows over time.

These who believed at the Jordan have their faith confirmed and affirmed and extended here as we've seen in verse 11. Point nine, this is the best. The comment of the master of the feast famously, you've saved the best wine till last.

If we wait for what the Lord Jesus provides, it is always the best. It is the highest quality. And this challenges us to seek the fullness of life in Christ because that is the best.

It is the most satisfying. It is the most fulfilling. It is the most rewarding.

Finally, the 10th point of application, Jesus' miracles reveal his glory. The primary

purpose of this miracle isn't just to satisfy the need of the moment, although that is present. The primary purpose is to reveal his glory and confirm the faith of his disciples.

Our lives too are purposed for reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus. And as we experience his often invisible work in our lives, we should respond by recognizing his glory and sharing that with our fellow believers, speaking that truth to one another in love. So all together, you have an emphasis here on faith, obedience, trust in the Lord Jesus, his transforming power, his sanctifying power that not only results in freedom from judgment, but in joyous celebration and anticipation.

Weddings were some of the greatest celebrations to be had anywhere in Israel. And they took place even under Roman oppression. There was still joy and rejoicing, celebration, affirmation of the family and the guests who came to celebrate.

And Jesus is going to return to this figure over and over again. Through him, our ordinary circumstances can be turned into opportunities to experience his glory and power and confirm our faith. That is miracle number one, the conversion of water to wine at the wedding feast of Cana, a review and extension of our coverage in the past.

We'll pick up next Sunday with miracle number two, which is the healing of the nobleman's son, also recorded only in the Gospel of John. We'll see that next time, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful truth of your word.

Thank you for the amazing amount of spiritual benefit we gain by slowing down and taking time to examine the details and plumb the depths of the riches to be found in your word. We pray that as we meditate and consider what we have seen this morning, that your Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, help us to see its pertinence in our own lives, to confirm our faith, to motivate our obedience, and to be ever watchful for the transforming grace that reflects your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus. We ask it in his name.

Amen.