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Glory at the Wedding

John 2.1-11

**Series: The Glory of Christ
The Village Church
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I. Text

A. **John 2:1–11** (ESV) —

1. 1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.
2. 2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.
3. 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”
4. 4 And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”
5. 5 His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”
6. 6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.
7. 7 Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim.
8. 8 And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it.
9. 9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom
10. 10 and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.”
11. 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

II. **Miracles and Signs**

A. Jesus’ ministry abounds in miracles

1. Hard to read a page of the gospels without a miracle of one sort or another
2. But Jesus’ miracles were not just to dazzle; not just to attract a crowd
 - a. They are called signs in John
3. **John 20:30–31** (ESV) —
 - a. 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;
 - b. 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

4. So the signs and wonders Jesus did are done for a purpose
 - a. To generate faith and new life in Christ
5. In addition, the miracles of Jesus fulfill two other functions
 - a. Attestation – they confirm the authenticity and authority of the messengers of the gospel – Jesus being the chief
 - b. Symbols – they teach something about who Jesus is, and what the gospel is all about

B. **Attestation**

1. **John 3:2** (ESV) —
 - a. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”
2. Miracles are, by definition, **only things God can do**
 - a. A genuine miracle requires a being who, as Creator of all that exists, is capable of contravening the ordinary laws of nature to accomplish truly remarkable things
3. When Jesus did miracles He validated His existence as the Son of God incarnate
 - a. Nicodemus understood that much at least (though at this point he was pretty clueless on other things)
4. Now, this was the case long before Jesus
5. **Exodus 4:1–5** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’ ”
 - b. 2 The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.”
 - c. 3 And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it.
 - d. 4 But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—
 - e. 5 “that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”
6. There is some controversy about this claim that only God can do miracles
 - a. Some point out verses like 2 Thessalonians 2.9-10
 - b. **2 Thessalonians 2:9–10** (ESV) —
 - (1) 9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,
 - (2) 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.
 - c. But these are “false signs and wonders”; counterfeit as some translations have it

- (1) Like a magicians trick
 - (2) Cf Moses' rods and the Egyptians' magicians attempts at duplication
7. And of course, the apostles did miracles as well during the apostolic period
 - a. But again, those miracles were done by God for the purpose of attesting to the authoritative credentials of the apostles
 8. **Hebrews 2:3–4** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard,
 - b. 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
 9. So, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were designed to attest to the validity of the message of the apostles
- C. **Symbol**
1. The signs in John are said to be symbols – that is, they represent something
 - a. They teach us various truths
 - b. Signs have that which they signify!
 2. Seven signs in the gospel of John
 - a. John 2 – water into wine in Cana (Galilee)
 - b. John 4.43ff – healing of official's son (Cana, Galilee)
 - c. John 5 – healing of invalid at Bethesda on Sabbath
 - d. John 6 – feeding of 5,000 – followed by Bread of Life
 - e. John 6 – walking on water
 - f. John 9 – healing of man born blind – talks about spiritual blindness
 - g. John 11 – raising of Lazarus – resurrection and life
 - h. John 20 – resurrection (not usually counted among the seven)
 - i. John 21 – catch of fish – followed by breakfast, “feed my sheep” (again, not usually included among the seven)
 3. The first of these signs was at this wedding in Cana
 - a. And because this miracle is a sign, a symbol – we're supposed to be learning things from it

III. **The Time for Miracles**

- A. Before getting into the wedding itself, consider the timing of the miracle
 1. **John 2:4** (ESV) —
 - a. 4 And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? **My hour has not yet come.**”
 2. **John 7:1–9** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.
 - b. 2 Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand.
 - c. 3 So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing.

- d. 4 For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”
 - e. 5 For not even his brothers believed in him.
 - f. 6 Jesus said to them, “**My time has not yet come**, but your time is always here.
 - g. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.
 - h. 8 You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.”
 - i. 9 After saying this, he remained in Galilee.
3. Now, He eventually did go up to the feast – but incognito
4. **John 7:25–31** (ESV) —
- a. 25 Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?”
 - b. 26 And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?
 - c. 27 But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”
 - d. 28 So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know.
 - e. 29 I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”
 - f. 30 So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, **because his hour had not yet come**.
 - g. 31 Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”
5. **John 8:20** (ESV) —
- a. 20 These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, **because his hour had not yet come**.
6. **John 12:20–33** (ESV) —
- a. 20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.
 - b. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”
 - c. 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.
 - d. 23 And Jesus answered them, “**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ...**
 - e. 27 “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, **save me from this hour**’? **But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ...**
7. **John 13:1** (ESV) —
- a. 1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that **his hour had come** to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

8. **John 17:1-5** (ESV) —
- a. 1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, **the hour has come**; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,
 - b. 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.
 - c. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
 - d. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.
 - e. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.
- B. So, there is a time and place for everything – including miracles

IV. **The Cana Wedding**

- A. Now, let’s look at this wedding, and see how this miracle attests to Jesus’ ministry, to the gospel, and what the symbols teach us

V. **A Joyful Sign**

- A. The first thing we see is that this sign – the turning of water into wine – is a joyful sign
- 1. And it reflects the joy of our Savior
- B. We shouldn’t miss the fact that Jesus and his disciples – having just had his earthly ministry inaugurated through the ministry of John the Baptist – found themselves invited to **the most joyful of all occasions– a wedding!**
- 1. And weddings in that culture were not like the weddings in our culture
 - a. As big a deal as we make of weddings in our society – they were a much bigger deal
 - b. They were the community building event of the city
 - c. The weddings lasted for pretty nearly a week
 - d. They ate, they danced – and yes the wine would flow
 - 2. It was the grandest of all parties
 - a. And Jesus was invited
 - b. And He came
 - c. And presumably – He enjoyed Himself, and He enjoyed engaging with the other guests
 - 3. Are you a joyful person by nature?
 - a. **Christians should be the most joyful of all persons**
 - b. We have everything to be joyful about!
 - c. We deserve eternal judgment – and Jesus gives us eternal life by faith in Him
 - d. We are sinners by nature, but we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ and we will eventually be like Him because we will see Him as He is
 - e. We have a destiny in glory, in the immediate presence of God who

- is love – surrounded by a glorified and loving community
 - f. What have we got to be sour about?
- C. Would you have been invited to the wedding?
 - 1. Would the happy couple feel like you would contribute to their joy?
 - a. Jesus was invited
 - b. Jesus was joyful
 - c. And His first sign was joyful
- D. Of course the miracle was turning water into wine
 - 1. I will say nothing about the dangers of wine, and of the cultural results of various types of intoxication and addiction
 - a. That's for another time and place
 - 2. I will also say nothing of whether their wine was substantially different from the wine of today
 - a. Again – that's not on the radar screen in this miracle
 - 3. I will say that **wine in those days was associated with joy**
 - a. **Psalm 104:14–15** (ESV) — 14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man...
 - b. **Ecclesiastes 10:19** (ESV) — 19 Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life...
 - 4. Wine is a joyful drink
 - a. And in a wedding – the party would continue only as long as the wine was flowing
 - b. But they had run out of wine!
 - c. And therein lies the problem
- E. Jesus turned the water into wine
 - 1. And so restored the joy of the occasion
- F. The Gospel of the Kingdom is joyful
 - 1. The King of the Gospel is joyful
 - a. And His first miracle is a joyful miracle
 - 2. And if we are of the gospel, we are to be a joyful bunch!

VI. **A Timely Sign**

- A. Jesus first miracle was a timely sign
 - 1. And that's ironic
 - a. Because when Jesus' mother called attention to the problem of no wine, he responded by saying
 - b. **John 2:4** (ESV) — 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."
 - 2. Jesus is telling His mother that it's not time for His notoriety to grow
 - a. Not time for Him to emerge from status of rabbi to the status of incarnate Son of God and so provoke the authorities
- B. But it's not that Jesus does nothing
 - 1. He does act – and He does do a miracle
 - a. But the kind of miracle He does is timely – but not a particularly

public display of power that would characterize His subsequent miracles

2. He gets a bunch of servants to take large water jars, fill them with water, and take them to the master of the feast
 - a. And when they do that, it turns out that the water is now wine
 3. The master of the feast doesn't know how it happened or who was responsible
 - a. The couple wasn't aware of Jesus' activity
 - b. They were all just happy that the party could continue
 4. The only people who knew were Jesus' mother and the servants
- C. So what kind of miracle, what kind of sign would Jesus do?
1. He would do something that is **perfectly appropriate for the time and place**
 - a. Not something that would provoke a reaction from the authorities before that time is called for

VII. **A Participatory Sign**

- A. Third, Jesus used what I would call a participatory sign
1. His miracle, His sign required the participation of the servants
 - a. He gave them instructions – He issued **a command**
 - b. He says, **“Fill the jars with water”**
 2. Unless the servants obeyed the command of Jesus, there would have been no wine – and no party
 - a. The miracle required their participation
- B. Remember as well that when Mary was kindly rebuked by Jesus because His hour had not yet come that she told the servants, **“Do whatever he tells you.”**
1. So when Jesus issued His command, they did exactly what Jesus told them
- C. Do you realize how significant a gospel principle that is?
1. If you want to experience the blessings of Jesus, “Do whatever He tells you.”
- D. This rubs us the wrong way
1. We want to do what we want to do
 - a. We want to pick and choose which command so Christ we'll obey
 - b. We want to be kings and queens of our own little domains
 - c. If Jesus suggests we do something, we'll see if it fits in with our plans and then decide to obey or not
 2. But that's not the gospel
 - a. The gospel of the Kingdom is the gospel of the King
 - b. The sovereign ruler of the universe
 - c. And when He tells us to do something we better do it
- E. That's what Mary said
1. “Do whatever he tells you!”
 - a. Because this miracle, this sign, is a participatory sign
- F. And it's a firm gospel principle
1. If you want to experience the blessings of Jesus, “Do whatever he tells you!”

VIII. A Gracious Sign

- A. Fourth, turning water into wine is a gracious sign
 - 1. It is gracious, first of all because of where it takes place
- B. Jesus didn't choose to do His first miracle in the seat of Roman power, in Rome
 - 1. He didn't even choose to do His first miracle in the seat of religious power, in Jerusalem
- C. Jesus picked an out of the way community – **Cana – located in an out-of-the-way and insignificant province – Galilee**
 - 1. Galilee in those days was thought of as the arm-pit of Palestine
 - a. Remember Nathanael – “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”
 - b. And Nazareth is in Galilee
 - 2. Galilee was known as Galilee of the Gentiles
 - a. So heavily influenced by pagan elements ever since the Assyrians overran the area in 722 B.C.
 - 3. But that's where Jesus does His first sign – in an inconspicuous, out-of-the-way, insignificant community
- D. It's also a gracious sign because of how He did it
 - 1. He didn't involve the happy couple; He didn't involve the master of the feast (they must have had wedding planners in those days as well)
 - 2. **He did His miracle with the servants**
 - a. We don't know whether they were hired help – the caterers of their day
 - b. Or whether they were just friends of the bride and groom
 - 3. But they remain nameless for all of history
 - a. Except that they experienced the blessing of Jesus
- E. And of course, it is a gracious sign because **it was a gracious event**
 - 1. Marriage between a man and woman is one of the great institutions of grace established by God at the creation
 - a. And as such it is worth celebrating
 - 2. So Jesus' first sign contributed to the success of the greatest institution of grace in the history of the human race – a wedding
- F. The Gospel of the Kingdom is a gracious gospel – and the King of the gospel is a gracious king
 - 1. So His first miracle is a gracious miracle

IX. An Abundant Sign

- A. Fifth, Jesus first miracle was an abundant sign
 - 1. One of the most amazing elements of the turning water into wine was the amount of wine produced
- B. Jesus used six stone water jars – each of them holding 20-30 gallons of water
 - 1. And He had the servants fill them to overflowing – filled them to the brim
 - a. And so the wine literally overflowed from their containers in abundance

2. Do the math – that’s between **120 and 150 gallons of wine!**
 - a. That’s more than they could possible drink
 - C. But it’s in character for our Savior
 1. Whose gospel is the gospel of abundant life!
 - a. The blessings of the gospel are more than we could ever fully experience
 2. **John 10:10** (ESV) —
 - a. 10 ... I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
 - D. What kind of miracle would Jesus do?
 1. He would do – and did do – an abundant sign
 - a. Because it reflects an abundant Gospel
 - b. From a King of the gospel who lavishes abundant blessings on His subjects
- X. **A Magnificent Sign**
- A. Sixth, Jesus’ first miracle was a magnificent sign
 1. While abundance has to do with the quantitative dimension – with the amount – of wine
 - a. Magnificence has to do with the qualitative dimension – with the quality of the wine
 2. **John 2:9–10** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom
 - b. 10 and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.”
 - B. So when Jesus turned the water into wine, the wine was the best possible wine
 1. It was magnificent wine
 - a. It came from a magnificent Savior
 - b. A Savior who “does all things well”
 - C. The Gospel of the Kingdom is **a magnificent Gospel**
 1. It is the only Gospel that accomplishes everything needful for a sin-sick, broken world
 - a. The only Gospel that **saves, sanctifies, and heals**
 - b. The only Gospel that truly **reconciles a lost humanity to a Holy God**
 - c. The only Gospel that **reconciles conflicted human beings with each other**
 - D. And that’s because the King of the Gospel is a magnificent King
 1. **Colossians 1:15–20** (ESV) —
 - a. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
 - b. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

- c. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
 - d. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
 - e. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
 - f. 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
- E. So it is no surprise that the first miracle of Jesus, His first sign, is a magnificent sign
- 1. Abundant in its quantity
 - 2. Magnificent in its quality

XI. A Prophetic Sign

- A. The stone water jars were sanctified for Jewish rites of purification
 - 1. And here Jesus has them filled with water
 - a. But then turns the water into wine
- B. So many signs are understood in retrospect
 - 1. And it's hard in retrospect to see in the wine the connection with the wine of the Lord's Supper
 - a. Where the wine represented the blood of Christ
 - b. The blood which cleanses the believer from sin
- C. So, while this miracle was under the radar, it nevertheless carried a meaning which would be picked up by the early church as related to the cleansing blood of Jesus

XII. A Glorious Sign

- A. Jesus' first miracle was a glorious sign
 - 1. **John 2:11** (ESV) —
 - a. 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and **manifested his glory**....
 - 2. John wants us to understand that in this sign Jesus didn't entertain
 - a. Didn't dazzle an audience
 - b. Didn't blow us away with incredible power
 - 3. But in His first sign **He displayed His nature and character**
- B. That's what the glory of God is all about
 - 1. God displays His glory when He reveals His nature and character to us
 - a. And that is what Jesus did in this first sign
- C. The glory of Christ – the character of Christ – is evident in each of the elements we have mentioned
 - 1. His **joy** is evident as the sign was a joyful sign
 - 2. His **sovereign** orchestration of history is evident in the timeliness of the sign
 - 3. His **reign and rule** is evident in His command of participation of the servants in this sign
 - 4. His **mercy** is evident in the graciousness of this sign
 - 5. His expansive **blessings** are evident in the abundance of this sign
 - 6. His **holiness** is evident in the magnificence of this sign

- D. The miracles of Jesus are not just dazzling displays of power
 - 1. They are meant to teach
 - a. And they teach about who He is
- E. So this sign – the turning of the water into wine – was a glorious sign

XIII. **A Faith-Generating Sign**

- A. Finally, Jesus turning water into wine was a faith-generating sign
 - 1. **John 2:11** (ESV) —
 - a. 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. **And his disciples believed in him.**
 - 2. Once they saw what Jesus did, the sign affirmed the faith of this newly concocted band of followers into genuine believers
- B. And that’s what it’s meant to do with each one of us
- C. If we are already believers, Jesus turning water into wine should encourage our faith
 - 1. And confirm us in our walk with Him
 - 2. We should walk with Him in confidence and obedience
 - a. Always doing “whatever He tells you”
- D. And if you are sitting on the fence about Jesus, let this sign settle the issue with you
 - 1. Know that this joyful, gracious, overflowing, glorious King of the gospel is worth following
 - 2. Indeed – the only One worth following
 - 3. **Acts 4:12** (ESV) —
 - a. 12 “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
 - 4. Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords
 - a. And His glory is over all the earth
- E. This sign if faith-generating
 - 1. **John 20:30–31** (ESV) —
 - a. 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;
 - b. 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
 - 2. May it generate faith in you