

## Jesus' Glory: Change You Can Believe In

Read [John 2.1-11](#)

As we begin today I want to narrow in on **verse 11 first**, because I think it is the **key to making sense** of our text.

Read verse 11.

Jesus performs a sign, in order to manifest his glory.

Do you **remember verse 14** from [chapter 1](#)? "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Jesus **wants us to see his glory here**. Notice in verse 11 that the **sight of glory leads to faith**. That's what everyone here this morning needs. We **need to behold Jesus so that we can believe** in him; keep believing in him.

Now, Jesus here performs a **sign** so that we can **see his glory**. It might help us here for a moment to **think about the purpose of a sign**. A sign is **never an end** in itself.

**\*ill.\*** If you took your family on a trip to **Disney World**, at some point, you'd begin to see signs for Disney world. Billboards, maybe mileage signs, etc.

But it would be pretty silly to pull your car to the side of the road, and get out sleeping bags, and get all giddy about arriving at one of those signs.

Its similar with this. Jesus turns the water into wine **in order to point us to something else**. Something about his glory.

This **not to say that the sign lacks merit** in its own right—it is a display of power; of Jesus **authority over nature**.

But there is **more here than just a display of power**; more than just a MIRRORacle....this **points beyond itself**....to something greater about Jesus....

And we want, here at the outset, to ask the question: what more about Jesus is revealed to us through the sign?

Take for example the **feeding of the 5,000** in John 6. Now this has great merit on its own. But afterwards Jesus signifies the aspect of his glory that it pointed to. He says, **"I am the bread of life."**

In the same way when Jesus heals the **man born blind in John 9**, it functions as a sign, because afterwards he says, **"I am the light of the world."**

Let's really **narrow in on this question**--hat **aspect of Jesus' glory is revealed** to us in the sign of water into wine?

I think this sign teaches us that in Jesus something new has come. What he brings is far better than what was in place before.

The critical phrase comes in the **middle of verse 6**, "there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification."

**FF Bruce**, "[The reference](#) to 'rites of purification' here gives the clue to the spiritual meaning of the present narrative."

This water was **used by the Jews for ceremonial cleansing**. Not exactly **bath water**, but certainly **not drinking water**.

They would pour this water **over their hands**, or dip their hands into the water up to their **elbows**—to be **cleansed of the filth that came from contact with Gentiles**, and other things in the world.

This is ritual water, holy water, cleansing water, and it is used over and over again to take away filth, and yet (Hebrews 10) never truly cleanses a man.

So what is going on here? Jesus is saying that this water is **no longer necessary because he has come**.

**FF Bruce**, "The water, provided for purification as laid down by Jewish law and custom, stands for the whole ancient order of Jewish ceremonialism, which Christ was to replace by something better."

The **water symbolizes the old order**, which is no longer necessary. The **wine represents the new order**, which is **embodied in** the person of **Jesus**.

Like a **good mystery novel**, you have to read the gospel of John again and again to really see this.. Think about the **clues**:

--**verse 4**—my **hour has not yet come**....every time John uses that phrase he is talking about Jesus' death.

--**wine** is Jesus' chosen element for the **remembrance of his blood** (Lord's Supper)

--**blood is a purifier**—**Hebrews 9.14**, "how much more will the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, **purify our conscience** from dead works to serve the living God.

--similarly in **Revelation 7** the worshippers around the throne of God, "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

**Blood purifies and cleanses. Wine point to blood. Jesus is saying: my blood will make all things new.**

The **religion of Judaism** is being **replaced by the reality** of Jesus Christ. As much as **wine surpasses water**, Jesus Christ surpasses the old order.

When Jesus turns the water into wine, he, in essence is saying, "**By my blood, I will make all things new!**"

He **does not say it explicitly** like he does with other signs (feeding, unblinding).

But the **broader context of the gospel** of John helps us to see it.

For example: **John 1.17**, "for the law was given through mooses; grace and truth [the new thing] came through Jesus Christ."

And then following John 2:1-10, the **rest of chapter 2 plus chapters 3 and 4** contain this same basic message:  
Jesus replaces the old and brings the new.

John 2: **Worship at the Temple** is replaced by worship that comes through **union with the risen Christ**.

John 3: **Nicodemus**, an experienced Jewish teacher, must be born again

John 4: **Water of Jacob's well** replaced by the living water of Christ

John 4: **Worship in Jerusalem** or Gerizim is replaced by **true worship** that happens in spirit and in truth.

Jesus is the bread of life. He is the light of the world. And he is making all things new through his blood.

Now, **when a new thing comes**—assuming it's a good thing—it brings **all sorts of changes with it**.

**\*ill.\*** This is one of the things that attracted many people to **Barrack Obama** when he was running for president.

"Change we can believe in."

He was relatively **new on the scene**. And he **promised change**. And it granted **momentum** to his campaign.

Now, even **supporters seem frustrated** that not much has changed.

But Jesus is in a **whole different category** than President Obama. When he brings a **new thing**, change comes, and it's good. **Very good**.

I see **5 changes** that come as a **result of the new thing** that Jesus is doing.....

### 1. Everyone Gains Access to Jesus

When Jesus addresses Mary as woman, it **sounds harsh to our ears**. It is **not quite so harsh in the Greek**, but I don't think its **exactly warm**. Less less than warm; **not disrespectful**.

**One clue** that Jesus' word here, "woman" is not disrespectful is that in **John 19:26**, Jesus is hanging on the cross, and he tenderly makes provision for Mary's care after his death by saying, "**woman, behold your son.**"

But to refer to her in this way is **still less than the typical warmth** shared in communication between a mother and a son.

**Why** does Jesus talk to her this way?

He is **creating distance** between he and his mother.

We get **even more indication** of that in Jesus' question: "what does this have to do with me?"

Every other time that phrase occurs in the gospels it is on the **lips of demons** seeking to create distance between themselves and Jesus.

So, **what is happening here?**

One more little **clue**:

final phrase in verse 4, "my hour has not yet come."

That phrase is always used in the **gospel of John in reference to the cross itself**. Jesus knows that to begin to perform signs is to set himself on a **collision course with the cross**.

And what he is doing in this **measured rebuke** to Mary is to **make sure that everyone** understands that as he enters public ministry he is no longer able **to act under her authority**, or in response to her wishes. Really, under or in response to any human authority.

The **nature and status** of Jesus relationship with his mother is undergoing a **fundamental shift**.

Mary does not get an inside track to Jesus. She has no special status.

As much as anyone else Mary needs Jesus. And she'll have to come to him by faith—like we all do.

While this functions as mild rebuke to Mary, it is really good news to the rest of us.

You have the **same access to Jesus that Mary did**.

Though you live some **2000 years later**;  
are **not related** to him;  
have **never met him** in person;  
are of a **different ethnicity** than he,  
speak a **different language** than he did  
.....you have the **same access** as his own mother.

**Throughout this public ministry** Jesus found it necessary to make the point very clear that no one got special privileges with him. **All could come**. But all came on the **same basis—faith**.

Do you remember **Mark 3**?

And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:31-35 ESV)

Or **Luke 11:27-28**, “As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.”

Think of this for a second. You have **access to the King of Kings**. The owner of all.

**\*ill.\*** at the root of the bitterness experienced by those who are a part of the **Occupy Wall Street** movement is resentment over a **lack of access**.

They believe that a **very privileged group** of people in our country **has gained and now manipulates** the majority of wealth in our country, and controls who has access to it.

I’m making **no comment on the merits** of their claim; I’m just noting **their thinking**.

But there is **no nepotism** with Jesus. There is **no hoarding the privileges of upper-crust**. There is **no restriction** about who is invited to his club.

In fact, the Bible says, “**Whoever will call** on the name of the LORD will be saved.” Whoever. No qualifications outside of faith. And when you come into his family, you receive the **full benefits** of sonship.

## **2. Full Forgiveness is Granted**

We already noted that the **water represents the whole old order of Jewish law and custom**. It was a law and order that was in place to **point toward our need of forgiveness**. And yet it was never sufficient to grant that **forgiveness in full**.

Here is how **Hebrews 10** puts it:

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, (Hebrews 10:11-12 ESV)

Hebrews 10 goes on to say that he brings a NEW and LIVING WAY

Jesus **brings a forgiveness that no priest or holy water could**; a permanent **status as welcomed and accepted** and forgiven and justified that no ritual in Judaism ever could.

So here’s a **good thing that ripples out from the new thing**; here is **change you can believe in**:  
Forgiveness for sin is available to you

**\*ill.\*** One of **my sons struggles particularly with one sin**. It’s a pattern in his life. And sometimes when I talk to him about it I’ll say....when this certain situation arises, this is usually how you (sinfully) respond.

And he will say to me, “**not usually.....**”

Why is that? Its because he **does not like the burden of guilt** that his sin brings. It **weighs** on him. And he wants to be free of that. He wants to think of himself as **cleaner than he is**.

But I have **good news for him**. And I have **good news for you**. You **don’t have to wash your hands in holy water** that never really makes you pure.....you just have to **trust in the once for all sacrifice of the Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world.....

God **does more than cancel** the record of our wrong. That is enough good news. But he **also provides the righteousness that we lack**. Look at the little glimpse of glory that John wants us to see.

Look again at verses 9 and 10.

Now, from those verses, **who would you say is responsible for providing wine** for this wedding party?  
*The groom, right?*

How did he do? *He failed.*

**Who gets the credit for the above and beyond provision** of wine at the party? *The very one he failed to provide what was necessary.*

This is **exactly like the work of Jesus on our behalf**. He not only forgives our failure. He **supplies our righteousness** by crediting his righteous record of obedience to our account. What astoundingly good news.

### 3. Full and Joyful Life is Possible

One of the things that can make this **text difficult** for some of you to hear, is the sting and **darkness of drunkenness** in your life, or in your family's life.

I am **sympathetic to that**. But at the same time, we have to say that our lives, and how we think about life needs to be **informed by God's word more than our experience**. As we seek to do that, God will help us.

Alcohol, like food and sex and money, is something created by God for our good, that sinful humans take and twist, and abuse and make their lives miserable with. But because sinful humans abuse it, does not mean that it is not a gift of God. While the Bible prohibits the abuse of alcohol (drunkenness), it also pictures an abundance of wine as an indicator of God's blessing, and as an indicator of joy in his people.

The greatest blessing that the Bible associates with an **abundance of wine** is actually the **arrival of the Messiah**.

**Amos 9.13**,  
 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD,  
 "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper  
 and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed;  
 the mountains shall drip sweet wine,  
 and all the hills shall flow with it.

**Isaiah 25.6**,  
 On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples  
 a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,  
 of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

We also find that Scripture often associates **joy with wine**:

**Psalms 104.14-15**:  
 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock  
 and plants for man to cultivate,  
 that he may bring forth food from the earth  
 and wine to gladden the heart of man,  
 oil to make his face shine  
 and bread to strengthen man's heart.

**Ecclesiastes 10:19**:  
 Bread is made for laughter,  
 and wine gladdens life,

And now we find **Jesus here at this party**. Verse 10 seems to imply that it led to drunkenness in some.

Jesus **does not back away** from demonstrating his glory in this context. In fact, he **uses this context** to highlight his glory. He **knows what he is doing**. He's purposeful here, and intentional.

Because let's be honest about the **metaphor that is in play here**:

We have **holy water**, representative of the old, dead, eclipsed form of Jewish purification. And it is replaced with **fermented wine**.

The **old dead religion is the holy water**. **Jesus is the new wine**.

**Religion is being replaced by reality**.

The **cold, dead letter of the law** is being replaced by the **exuberance and joy of relationship with Jesus**.

And so this brings us to **2 fundamentally different approaches to Christianity**. One approach is **religion**.....which is based on being good, and therefore accepted.

This is how many churchgoers live. Their theology is orthodox. They testify to belief in grace. But fundamentally they are **do-gooders**. They **feel good about themselves when they perform**, and feel superior to others; but are **dead and lifeless and angry** when they fail and are exposed.

The sad reality is that **many church goers have no wine**. They come to church, but their hearts have not been changed. They lack joy, they lack life.

Religion does not satisfy.

And the other way to live is to **recognize that you bring nothing to relationship** with Jesus that he wants and can benefit from. Your hands contain no goodness. They are dirty, blood soaked hands.

One of the most nerve wracking things about who God is, is not that he feels wrath toward our sin, but that he thinks of our righteous deeds as filthy rags.

But in the gospel we find that **when we come to Jesus with empty hands—he accepts us**. He forgives our sin. He clothes us in his righteousness. And he throws that **prodigal son-come home party** for us. He prepares a table for us.

And that **breeds and creates joyful fullness in life**.

It reminds me of the **old hymn**:

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to the cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

#### **4. Radical Obedience is Expected**

Look at the submission and faith and radical obedience of those involved in this passage.

First notice Mary....

Mary **does not get upset** at the gentle rebuke. Do WHATEVER he tells you, she says.

That is the **only instruction** that Mary gives in the whole Bible. And the instruction is to **give full obedience** and allegiance to Jesus.

From heaven, I **don't know how much of what happens** on earth Mary is aware of. But oh, how **she must be grieved** by the devotion of some to her over and above her Son.

Isn't it apparent in this story that there is **something about Jesus** and his authority that led everyone around him to an **implicit and radical obedience**.

Now notice the **radical obedience of the Servants**.....

Verse 6 tells us that there were **6 large stone jars**. These are the types of jars that would not be moved from the house. This would mean **lots of trips to the well** before these large jars were full to the brim.

The first task was maybe a difficult task; a time consuming task. But next Jesus tells them to do something more than tiresome or difficult. He **tells them to do something risky**.

“Take what is in the jars, and give it to the master of the feast.”

Remember this is **not drinking water** Jesus tells them to take. This is washing water. Its more akin to dipping out of a used **bath tub than it is giving the guy a bottle of Evian** spring water.

And its certainly not wine—which he would expect to be served to him.

By doing this **seemingly foolish thing**, these servants were risking something....risking a beating.....

But they did it. There was **something about Jesus that led them to obey him**. No matter how unreasonable or risky it seemed.

Jesus makes the **same demands of us today**. He intends to manifest his glory in the world just like he did in that small Judean village.

And he will **invite his people** into that work. And **frequently what he asks** of us will seem foolish to the world, and it will involve risk.

He will ask us to **move out of our comfort zones, and obey him**.

These servants **obeyed Jesus, and it was wine**. And he was **glorified**.

Jesus will likewise **turn our obedience into wine for his glory**.

What is Jesus asking you to do **that feels risky, but that will gain glory** for His Name? You know the Jim Elliott quote:

“**He is no fool**, who gives what he can never keep, to gain what he can never lose.”

It is those who are **fools for the LORD** Jesus that he will **use to gain glory** for his great name.

Gaining a glimpse of his glory (which John and Jesus are laboring toward for us), will alone motivate this sort of radical obedience:

**Isaac Watts** hits the nail on the head in this familiar hymn:

[first] When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

[last] Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

## **5. Faith is Created**

We turn our attention to the last, and very brief sentence in the text today.

Verse 11, “And his disciples believed in him.”

They saw what he did. And **they believed**.

**Do you?**

You see Jesus is not firstly a **historical figure to interpret**.

He is not mainly a **sage to be consulted**.

He is not a **therapist to dump on**.

He is not a sideshow **MIRROracle worker to gawk at**.

What he is first, and most importantly is the **Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**.

Do you believe in him?

In other words have you pinned your eternal hope for forgiveness, on Jesus, who died in your place?

Today, trust in him. Repent of all the sins that flow from your insistence that you rule your life. Trust in Jesus as Lord; as Savior. And come to him.

Pray.