

In Spirit and in Truth: Rooted and Established Freedom Church of Denton

John 2

The New Wine, the New Temple, and the New Man

Volume 1, Lesson 15

- **In Devotion** (feel free to highlight, underline, and scribble notes. Take your time, working through the following material over the course of the next week...it would be better for you to get through one sentence with understanding than the whole lesson with no understanding!)

*When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine,
and did not know where it came from...the master of the feast
called the bridegroom and said to him...you have kept the good
wine until now -
John 2:9-10*

With the Passover quickly approaching, and on the third day after having entered into Galilee, Christ the Incarnate Word performs the first of the miracles that were wrought directly by his hands.

Far from accidental, yet unanticipated and without the pomp and circumstance of traditional and cruel religion, Jesus enters the empty space of humanity and the void that had been created through the futility of the law of Moses. His sermon was delivered, not in the setting of the synagogue, but in a well-timed miracle at the wedding of an acquaintance of either friend or family.

Here, the Godhead was introducing a new order. It was an order that was sacred and holy, yet enshrined more in the element of folk than philosophy. The Christ was here to engage culture and to bring heaven down from the unreachable heights of professional and systematized religion into the sphere of home, family, and relationship. And there was no better institution to vouchsafe the truths that were being revealed than that of marriage. And there was no better event to illustrate the heart of the Father in this new era than that of a wedding.

And this wedding had in its attendance, some of the most common and yet distinguished of guests, for the wedding company had invited Jesus and his disciples, as well as Mary the mother of Jesus. This was a sanctified setup. The demand had exceeded the supply and the wine had been depleted.

Mary, in her motherliness, was the first to notice. With the best of intentions, yet short in spiritual discretion, she summoned her Son to help solve the problem. Her weakness seemed to be one of timing and discernment. Her response was hurried and designed to address the physical. Jesus' clock was calibrated to the Father's timepiece and his interest rooted more in the eternal. Even so, he condescended.

Without even a hint of rudeness, but from the language of the Eternal Son, Jesus addressed the humanity of his mother calling her "Woman" rather than by an affectionate title. By doing so, he set the context for the truths that would be revealed in the miracle. They were truths that were birthed of heaven, not of a man or a woman.

The servants were called and the water-pots of purification were filled to near over-flowing with water. The miracle made manifest when the master of the wedding feast sipped from the freshly drawn wine that moments before had been mere water. This historical event was beginning to surrender its eternal and spiritual treasure and the hearts of the wise were beginning to be enlightened.

The wine had run out and the old tap had surrendered its final drop. The law had gone as far as it could go and self-righteousness had breathed its final breath. The Mosaic code had nailed its final nail in the coffin that now entombed the old man's cadaver. These were the truths the miracle was introducing. It would have been a tragic ending to a sad story had it ended there. Thankfully, Jesus begins where the world ends, and unlike man, he had saved the best for last. He was introducing a new wine, the best wine. It was a wine whose vintage was born from above and not below.

The old form was no longer needed because the substance had come. It was substance that would cleanse, but more than cleanse, it would also recreate; and this with the dynamic vitality of a fine vintage of new power and expansiveness, that would emanate spiritually from the grave of the transgressor as miraculously as the original creation order had come out of the futility of void and formlessness. This new order would be purely gratuitous, free and full, transcending even the sincerest gestures of the most admirable devotees, while inducing the highest affections and longings of those of whom the scales had begun to fall and who were eager to peer into such things.

The new disciple of Christ must come to the realization that he cannot approach heaven through the righteousness of the law and dead works. The new life will spring from a new place, the place of the Spirit. It will be a life that flows from an uncorrupted place of prayer, a place of dependency on God, a place of rest, and a place of trust. It is in the defense of this interest that Jesus left the wedding at Cana and headed toward the temple in Jerusalem as the day of Passover drew near. His discovery at the temple would prove to be one of the most offensive in his earthly ministry. Charlatans had occupied the place of the Holy.

Having just introduced (in Cana) what would be the character and nature of this new order, he aggressively and providentially turns his attention toward the monstrous perversion that had assumed the seat of ecclesiastical authority in the temple in Jerusalem. The temple officials had exchanged the responsibility of the ministration of the holy and spiritual ordinances for the racket of religious enterprise. The ruling order had become the arch enemy of the kingdom that Christ was unveiling, and it had to be dealt with quickly, decisively, and thoroughly. While the failings and weakness of men should be endured with the same patience that the seashore shows the sea in its relentless beatings, no pity nor quarter should ever be afforded demonic usurpers that squat in the holy house of the Lord. In a rare, yet remarkably apt moment, Christ strategically and intentionally confronts the seat of power that held stronghold in the hearts and minds of those the

religious leaders were intended to serve. He lay the axe to the root of the evil. With a whip of chords, he drove every one of the religious hucksters from the temple, making sport of their merchandise.

The lesson couldn't be clearer for Christ's disciples, who have themselves become the chosen residence and sanctuary of the Holy Spirit in this new age. The Spirit of God is jealous for the holiness of his habitation and will not sublease space in the heart of the child of God, especially to profane and unclean tenants. We must evict all unlawful squatters, without notice and negotiation. We must decide that from this day forward, that our heart will no longer be a sanctuary for double-dealing and racketeering but will become an estate of reverential worship and prayer. For it is here that Christ sets discipleship in its proper course. Discipleship is, first and foremost, an endeavor of prayer. And we need not fall for the temptation of incrementalism. Jesus never says, please, could you just sin a little less? No, the response is always, go and sin no more. Lord, help us to surrender fully, and, full of faith.

And we should be sure, for as John notes in the conclusion of this chapter, Jesus does not need the testimony of a man to know what is in a man's heart. He is capable of discerning the root principle and the root motivation of our faith, and whether we have come to him merely because of what we have seen of his miracles, or on account of a deeper faith rooted in the holiness and righteousness of God. Would that all would strive against spiritual short-sightedness toward a faith that has quality, depth, and sincerity. One that not only saves, but that secures the confidence, favor, and affection of our heavenly Father. In Jesus name.

- **In Meditation**

New Study Skill: Read **John 2** at least three times slowly and all the way through. **Try reading the passage in a different translation of the Bible each time (e.g., ESV, NASB, NIV, NKJ, or Amplified)** It is good to read your selected passage all the way through without interruption before getting into the details. Before you can truly comprehend the individual trees, you need to understand them in the context of the forest!

Identify the **who, what, when, where, why,** and **how** in this passage _____

What do you see as the major divisions of thought in this passage? Try to divide **Chapter 2** into at least three sections:

Section One (fill in the verses here): _____
Section Two (fill in the verses here): _____
Section Three (fill in the verses here): _____

Section One – Jesus changes water to wine in Cana

What does the setting of Jesus first miracle say about his heart, mission, and style? How does this differ from the religionists? _____

How do you understand the interchange between Jesus and his mother Mary? What does it reveal about their natural relationship and their spiritual relationship with each other and with God? _____

What do you think the significance of the Jewish water pots was? _____

The new wine? _____

John says that this was the first of Jesus' signs. What is the purpose of a sign? What do you think this sign miracle pointed to? _____

How does this miracle relate to the Mosaic and New Covenant? _____

How significant is this that this was Jesus first miracle? _____

What else can we mine from this miracle as we meditate on the setting, the cast, the timing, etc.? _____

Section Two – Jesus cleanses the temple

The temple was undoubtedly a place that transaction was to occur, but not this type of transaction. Discuss the proper function(s) of the temple and how they had been perverted _____

Is there any significance to the timing of the miracle at Cana, the cleansing of the Temple, and that of Passover? _____

How do you understand the passion of Jesus in this account? A whip of chords? _____

Discuss the relation between Jesus body and the temple? And our bodies? _____

How did the resurrection enlighten Jesus' disciples regarding his prophecy of the destruction of the temple? _____

Section Three – Jesus knows the hearts of men

In vv. 23-25 identify the different classes of people that were believing in Jesus _____

Do you think that an individual either has faith or he doesn't, or is it possible for there to be a range of faith? Can the quality and sincerity of faith be deepened? How so? _____

See if you can explain the relation of each of the three sections above to one another. In other words, is there a correlation to the events described in each section? _____

In Prayer

Lord, thank you that you have relieved the burden of the law in my life and that I no longer need attempt to please you through my own righteousness and effort. I am grateful that you have provided all that you have required of me - and that, in abundance! I pray that I may walk out my new life from a place of purity and prayer, depending on you, moment by moment, for all that I need to live the life that you have called me to live. Grant me a quality of faith that not only leads me to salvation, but that secures everything that you would inspire me to ask for, not the least being the tender favor and affection of my heavenly Father!