

Mountain View 8 — The Better Wine

Sermon File Type	Sermon
Passages	John 2:1-12
Sermon Series	Mountain View
Topics	Marriage; Relationships; Old Covenant; New Covenant
Tags	Purification, Parenting
Date	August 4, 2019

Introduction (Connection):

[Invite to John 2]

It took us seven weeks to get through John 1... we're going to start picking up the pace now that we've hit chapter 2.

And I'm pretty sure some of you have been waiting for me to get here because you think I'm gonna have to address a topic I haven't talked about before... and if you're wondering what that topic is, I'll give you the title of this sermon and you'll solve that riddle pretty quickly....

This message is called *The Better Wine*.

Tension:

"Oh boy... What's Pastor Scott gonna say about wine and alcohol, he's never directly talked about it before."

"Brodd is going to have to come down on one side of the issue or the other, he can't avoid it..."

Watch me... I don't have to say diddly squat.

Today's text isn't about alcohol, and for me to try to talk about it in just a few minutes as part of today would distract from what this text is all about and would lead to more confusion since it takes a bit more time to explain than a quick yes or a no in two minutes... maybe in another sermon someday 80 years from now.

Today's passage starts off a smaller section in the book of John from chs. 2-4 bound together by the same theme: The old has gone, the new has come.

- the old purifications with new wine,
- the old temple with the new temple,
- the old covenant with new birth,
- the old water of Jacob's well with new living water in Jesus
- the old worship in Jerusalem with the new worship in Spirit and in Truth.¹

Exposition:

John 2:1-12 — On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. ³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. 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

¹ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 166.

the feast called the bridegroom 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 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. ¹² After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.²

For almost the full year we have been on this journey to explore the glory of God in what is known as the greatest request we could ever make of God, "Show me your glory."

And this passage is actually an answer to that requests, if you check out v. 11...

v. 11 — This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory.

Jesus is showing us God's glory in this passage, and in this case, part of his glory, or the beautiful perfections of his sovereign character, are expressed in three main ways, and these come from an outline of a sermon by John Piper.

Jesus is...

- 1) The Obedient Son**
- 2) The Ultimate Purifier**
- 3) The All-Providing Bridegroom³**

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 2:1–12.

³ Taken from sermon outline by John Piper, "Obedient Son, Ultimate Purifier, All-Providing Bridegroom" (sermon, Desiring God, December 14, 2008), available online at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/obedient-son-ultimate-purifier-all-providing-bridegroom> [accessed online August 1, 2019].

Let's start walking through this passage.

The scene is a wedding, the people are Mary, Jesus' mother, and Jesus with his disciples.

When Jews reflected on what heaven or the arrival of the Messiah would be like, they thought about weddings, so of course they're going to do these big.⁴

The wedding would be announced, preparations made, the groom would gather his friends, walk to the home of his bride to be, collect her, then lead her in procession back to his home where the celebration of the wedding could last for as long as a week.⁵

And boy would they feast; they had good wine all week long, great food, celebration for a day, go to sleep, wake up the next day to a whole new celebration of this new marriage, with more wine, probably not as good, and more food, and more singing and merriment.

And who is there? Jesus!

Coming from the background I came from, this used to shock me... let me explain.

I grew up in an independent baptist church which God used to change my life and call me into ministry... but it was the kind of background where, if a pastor knew there was going to be alcohol served at the reception, he would attend the ceremony and leave.

⁴ Gary M. Burge, [John](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 91.

⁵ Ibid.

They weren't going to be seen in a place where alcohol was being consumed because they didn't want to have the appearance of evil.

They created and encouraged these unnaturally religious rules for holiness that even Jesus didn't hold to.

Jesus is here at this wedding where alcohol is being consumed and enjoyed, some people are even getting drunk as v. 10 implies...

And just so you all know, all the commentators on this passage say it can't work to argue that they were just knocking down Welch's grape juice to fit your ethical dilemma.

But here is Jesus, being invited to weddings and going to them!

I mean, look at Jesus! Look at the life and joy that is in Him!

He is liked by people, a friend of sinners, full of life... he isn't unnaturally religious by creating rules for the appearance of holiness that scripture doesn't explicitly command.

I mean, keep reading, and we're going to see Jesus show up in some pretty scandalous places with pretty scandalous people.

We have not been called to be unnaturally religious; we are to live life in such a way where there is such joy and kindness and service to all that those around us would be caught off guard and have to figure out what is so different about us.

Don't create rules for holiness that scripture doesn't explicitly command; you're making a self-made religion like Colossians 2 describes.

Jesus goes to this wedding, they are there celebrating and enjoying food and drink, and something happens: they run out of wine.

All I picture here is Jack Sparrow on the island yelling, "Why is the rum gone?!"

It is the responsibility of the bridegroom to make provisions for the wedding, especially to make sure there is enough wine to last the whole week.

To run out of wine would be a dreadful embarrassment for him

And so, Mary, possibly related to the bridegroom, decides to bring it to Jesus. "The wine has run out."

And Jesus responds in a pretty harsh way.

v. 4 — And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."

Now, butter this up all you want, try to make it as nice as you can... this isn't exactly a nice way to talk to your momma.

I know if Gwen asked me for something and I said, "Woman..." Mr. Whacker was gonna come out and leave some red marks on my behind.

Mr. Whacker wasn't my dad, it was a 12" piece of conveyor belt with leather sown onto it custom designed for spanking your kids.

But Jesus says to His mom, "Woman, what does this have to do with me?"

You see, Mary comes to Jesus with expectations that he would fix this problem.

But Jesus rebukes her because she is not His authority... God is.

So he says, "This is not your place to be calling out my power. My heavenly Father is the authority over my timing, my actions, and my life and death."

This is a massive declaration of who is the ultimate authority over Jesus; It isn't Mary.

Now if you've been typing up that text to your mom saying, "Woman, you're not my authority," go ahead and delete that, because you aren't the Light of the World, the Word of God who created all things and co-eternal with the Father.

But here's what we see in Jesus' example here: when we surrender our lives over to Christ, there is a massive shift in our horizontal relationships, to where they are not our ultimate authority.

Even though we are called to submit to others, when that submission leads us out of the will of God we submit to God's will, not theirs, even if it is a husband or wife or parent or an employer.

God becomes your commanding authority when you surrender your life to Him and His mission.

And Jesus is communicating that here to His momma, and yet, what does he still do? He provides more wine.

He still goes on and serves the need, why?

Because it is God's will for His Son to serve the needs of others... that he be a servant.

This is where we get to the first point:

Jesus is The Obedient Son

And of course that doesn't mean to Mary, that means to God.

Jesus demonstrates that his submission to the will of God is to serve the needs of others, and that is God's will for all who would surrender their lives to Him.

That's why Jesus says in Matthew 20 that whoever would be great among us must be a servant, just like Jesus came not to be served but to serve.⁶

So for us to be obedient sons and daughters of God, we ought to be servants of those around us.

"Oh, you've got that big project? I'm slammed full but can I help you with that sometime?"

"Oh, you're sick in the hospital or stuck in bed at home, do you need anything?"

This is why Mary's last words here are so important and bear a lot more significance than we may give them.

She says to the servants, "***Do whatever he tells you.***"

Brothers and sisters, "Do whatever Jesus tells you."

You've heard this for the thousandth time, whatever it is Jesus tells you to do, do it because he is for your joy, not trying to rob you of it.

It is not to steal from you pleasure and satisfaction, it is to lead you into it.

Do whatever Jesus tells you, and you'll find life tastes sweeter like the better wine.

⁶ Matthew 20:26-27

Be obedient sons and daughters.

Let's keep plugging along.

In v. 6, we see these six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, in total holding between 100 and 150 gallons.

The Old Mosaic Law found in the Old Covenant dealt a lot with those who were clean and unclean, meaning fit to be in the presence of God or unfit.

Any moral or physical blemish made one unclean, and therefore must be purified by some ceremonial act of cleansing.

These jars held the water for bathing in to be purified and made clean.

And what Jesus does is he takes that old covenant water for purification and turns it into new wine.

In the act of transforming this purification water, Jesus is replacing the old model of cleansing the unclean and is ultimately declaring, "I am the one who can make you clean, when my hour comes, in my death."

This is where we get to the second part of Jesus' glory shown here:

Jesus is the Ultimate Purifier.

Throughout Jesus' ministry, he often butts up against those who believe in moral cleanliness rather than moral transformation.

One time he called those persons "White-washed tombs," saying they look so pretty and nice on the outside but inside they're totally dead and reek of dead bodies.

Jesus takes away old model for cleansing and instead, replaces it with a drink used for celebration.

Why? Because this covenant is so much better! This gospel in Jesus Christ is so much better!

That's what the master of the feast says!

He's handed a glass of this new wine, smells it, tastes it, and is so shocked by the excellence and quality of the wine that he stops the party and gets the groom and says, "usually you put the good stuff out first, and once people have lost their taste, the poor. But you've kept the really good stuff, the better, more excellent wine until now."

This wine is so much better! What Jesus brings is so much better!

No longer is the pathway to God ceremonial cleansing or sacrifice. It is Jesus!

Who can ascend the hill to be in God's presence? Those who have been cleansed by Jesus!

Instead of working so hard to make ourselves clean through external appearances, we can come to Jesus and by faith in his death and resurrection, have every sin and stain and blemish washed away by the new wine of his blood.

So for those of you who have been working so hard to maintain a moral outward appearance of goodness before others claiming that you're good and clean... you don't do this like those people do and you do that five times a day...

When you get to the end of all you've worked so hard to maintain with your own efforts and that old, inferior, bitter, unsatisfying wine runs out,

Jesus will be standing there holding out the chalice of his better, superior, satisfying, new wine inviting you, "Come and drink, lets celebrate all I've done for you that you couldn't do for yourself."

Because he alone is the ultimate purifier, and there is much reason to celebrate.

Now, there is one last part of this that I want to take a look at.

The master of the feast, who is like the head waiter or caterer, tastes this new wine, is amazed with the taste, and calls in the bridegroom.

Remember, it is the responsibility of the bridegroom to hock up the cash to pay for enough drink to last the week.

And the master of the feast is basically trying to figure out what happened.

He said, "Usually it is the good stuff, then the cheap stuff to finish it up, but you have kept the good wine until now."

But did he keep the good wine until now? No.

What did this bridegroom fail to do... to provide enough.

That's the point: it was his shortcoming, his failure, his lack... he could not be enough.

Here's what I'm getting at: when I work with couples in pre-marital counseling and even when we're at the ceremony, I work to remind the couples of one key point...

Your spouse is not enough. Your husband will not be all you need. Your wife is not able to give you everything you need.

Things will run out. They will fail you, they will hurt you, they won't be able to perfectly protect you or provide for you.

If you're single and waiting for a spouse because you think they'll be enough to satisfy the longings of your heart, they won't measure up to what your heart needs.

All husbands fail to be all we ought to be. All wives fail to be all you ought to be.

But what does this passage say? Jesus doesn't fail! Jesus does measure up!

In fact...

Jesus is the All-Providing Bridegroom.

Quietly, omnipotently, Jesus plays the role of the perfect, all-providing Bridegroom.

Out of water comes wine that v. 7 says was so abundant it was filled to the brim—better than any husband could provide.

What Jesus provides for our souls is so much better than what any spouse can provide, and he even cares about the little needs too, because he is the perfect groom.

So please don't operate in the space where you believe that your husband or wife, or that future husband or future wife you've been waiting for, is designed by God to be your soul's ultimate satisfaction; God didn't make them for that, and if you think that, you're in for a huge let down.

Your husband or wife is designed by God to point you to the one who can ultimately provide all your soul needs for joy and satisfaction: Jesus.

Conclusion (Cast Vision):

Can you see how much better this wine is?

We're taught that everything revolves around us, what we desire, whatever we want, however we feel, whatever we can get... that's what we need.

No matter what you believe, the science shows when life is all about you, you're more miserable.

But when you surrender to God as your higher authority and do as he says, life is more satisfying, the wine of servant obedience tastes better.

When we try to keep up this facade of morality and it breaks down and people see who you finally are, Jesus stands there offering the better wine of His gospel to purify us, where he's not just going to cover you, he's going to transform your heart's desires and your mind's thoughts as well — the wine of Jesus purifying you from the inside out tastes better.

And when we look for other people to be all that we need and they fail us, Jesus is the all-sufficient provider who can satisfy every thing our hearts need... Jesus is the better wine.

Will you drink him in today?