

Love and Joy Comes to You

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 July 2021

Preacher: Dr. Don Owsley

[0 : 00] Good morning, all. Good morning. It's good to be here again.

Pastor Bill and Elder Rick invited me to fill in for him for the next, today and the next three Sundays. So what the plan is, is for us to get to know Jesus a little bit better.

That is by going through the book of John and looking at at least four of the seven miraculous signs that he performed. Just to see and get a sense of who Jesus is.

And he is not changed, has he? He's the same today as he was then. And he will always be the same. Father, thank you for this opportunity to gather together in your name. And as we look at the book of John, the gospel of John, may you enlighten us, open our eyes, give us ears to hear, but mostly to really take hold of who and what Jesus is.

And to see the kind of character that he has. We ask these things in your precious name. Amen.

John chapter 2, I'll be reading verses 1 through 12.

[1 : 17] This is from the New King James. And this is the passage we're looking at this morning.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

And the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding. When they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus came to him. They have no wine.

Jesus said to her, Woman, what does your concern have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, Whatever he says to do, you do it.

Now there were a set of six water pots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing 20 or 30 gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, Fill the water pots with water.

And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast. And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made into wine, and did not know where it came from, but the servants had drawn the water new, the master of the feast called the bridegroom.

[2 : 26] And he said to him, Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine. And when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior wine.

You have kept the good wine until now. This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

And after this he went down to Capernaum, he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples. And they did not stay there many days. Jesus is certainly the God of love.

And remember, he is the God who became man. He's not a man who ultimately became a God. He's the God who came down. And he is one who is not only a great, awesome king, but he is a loving and gracious and joyful king.

And what he does in this event, this is one of seven different signs, miracles that were pointing to him as the Messiah, the Savior. The Messiah King who has come to redeem Israel and to redeem others as well.

[3 : 37] Now, what had just happened earlier is that Jesus was ordained by God himself. And if you recall, the Holy Spirit came down and rested upon him.

And God said, this is the one in whom I am well pleased. And essentially that is an ordination.

Because while the Spirit of God came down looking like a bird, a dove, it also kind of reflected a hand that settled upon him as they would do when they are ordained.

And it was God himself who ordained Jesus. And Jesus is the Messiah King who has come. But people don't understand that.

They didn't get it yet. And he only had a few disciples at this time who were still trying to figure out who he was. They were following it. Some were followers of John the Baptizer.

John the Baptist, the greatest prophet. So they followed after Jesus. They were listening to his teachings because he was very, very different and unique. And he had something rather incredible and powerful to say.

[4 : 48] Unlike the other teachers. And there were many other teachers with traveling schools, if you will. That's what they did. They had rabbis who went around. And those who followed after the rabbi were like a class on a field trip.

Walking here and there. And the rabbi would meet another rabbi. And they would get into arguments and debates. And the best way to win an argument was to quote from the old fathers, the old Jewish teachers and masters.

Jesus never did that. It was confusing to them. He was so out of the box. But here's an event. And it says the event happened on the third day, which happens to be on a Tuesday.

Because the Greeks and the Jews called Tuesday the third day. And it was in Cana of Galilee, which was a five-hour walk away from Nazareth.

It was a lakefront property. And here is the first time that we see Mary, Jesus' mother, in John. And we'll see her again at the end of the Gospel of John.

[5 : 57] And she's there with a number of brothers as well as his disciples. And it could be that they were invited because Jesus was different. Could be that they knew that he started to teach in a unique way.

Could be they were relatives. We don't really know. But they were there. They were invited. And so they attended. And then it says, when the wine gave out.

Now notice, this is a Jewish wedding, obviously. The betrothal that took place, the engagement, was just as legally binding as the wedding itself.

You had to get a divorce if you were a betrothal. Even if you were married. So that was, betrothal was step one. The marriage was step two. And the feast could last anywhere from four to seven days.

So it wasn't one of those one-hour events or two-hour events that you went and then went to the reception. They partied. And it was four to seven days of wedding time.

[6 : 57] And it was a big deal. It was a major deal. People would come and go and they'd celebrate. But the one who hosted it, usually the father of the groom, was responsible to provide the food and, of course, the wine.

And if you ran out of wine and drank, shame on you. That was very, very embarrassing. And it was dishonorable. Well, the groom's father provided.

And if he had failed in that provision, then legal action. He could be sued for not providing the food and the wine for that.

The bride's husband. I mean, the bride's father could sue him for that. And not to have wine would have placed the father and the groom in a heavy financial liability.

So if you're going to have a wedding, make sure you provide and have all the provisions. Enough food. And I can well imagine it would be difficult to do that because, you know, Cana of Galilee, the place, the location was more populated than the other villages.

[8 : 06] And so if they came, there was a lot of people there. And it doesn't tell us necessarily when the wedding started. So all we know is on a third day, on Tuesday.

This was no small trial. The whole family's honor was at stake. The wedding could have been undone.

There wouldn't have been a divorce. It just would have been annulled, so to speak. And that was a great predicament. Now, Mary understood this as well as others.

But Mary comes to the rescue, so to speak, when she goes to Jesus. And she says, the wine is gone. They've run out.

They have no wine. And by the way, you know, this was not just grape juice. This was actual wine. It's the word, you know, synonymous with the Old Testament term of the quality that literally could make you drunk.

[9 : 09] It was 5 to 20% alcohol content. And new wine was low alcohol content. It was cheap. This was good wine. This was high quality wine.

This was, you know, drunken kind of wine, even though they were forbidden to get drunk. Don't get drunk. Psalm 104 in Ecclesiastes 9 talks about how God commends wine as a promise for the blessing of obedience to him.

And the promise of good blessing to party after having worked hard. And God said, okay, you've worked hard. Now you celebrate and do that with wine.

He commended that. It was used at the end of a season of labor as a sign of the fruit of hard work, as a sign of God's blessing. And in fact, if God blessed the grape vines and the vineyards, it meant that God was pleased with the people.

And out of that would come good grapes and good raisins and good wine. But wine was always understood as a symbol of joy and a blessing of the Holy Spirit.

[10:15] And they understood that. But what's great to hear, you know, great to understand from the Old Testament is that the Lord recognizes our hard work.

Maybe our boss doesn't. Maybe others don't. But God does. And he smiles on that. That's how good of a God we have. And Jesus is very much the God, you know, who came, who smiled. I'm sure he was thinking, I've got this. I'll fix this. God wants us to celebrate the fruit of our labor. You know, he doesn't want some kind of celebration watch or, you know, plaque or something. He really wants us to get into the celebration of a job well done. A reward of recognition of the fruit of the labor. And he delights in seeing us joyful and blessed.

He's not the God. And I'm talking about the God of the Old Testament. He's not a God who is a puddle glum, who every time you're happy, he's going to zap you.

[11:20] You know, some people have that imagination. This is the God of the Old Testament. He's always mad. Always angry. No, he's not. He's always pleased with his people. So it says, and when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, they have no wine.

They're out. And the point here is that Mary knows that there will be a time to come when her son needs to reveal himself as Messiah.

But even as we see in the other Gospels, she was constantly trying to figure out, is he really the Savior? And what does that mean? Is he truly the King? Is he divine?

What does that mean? But she did know that he could do something about it. So she probably figured, here's an opportunity. Jesus, here's your chance now to show who you are.

Verse 4 says, woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come. Now to us, in the English, it sounds like, you know, he's kind of angry at his mom.

[12:28] Woman, what's up? Don't tell me what to do. But that's not how the Hebrew understood it. In Aramaic, it was a Hebrewism.

It was a term of endearment when he said woman. It meant, you know, lady, dear one. It was not a term of derogation. He calls her woman and not mother because he is now adorned with his new role.

And his mothers and fathers, his brothers and sisters are those who follow him. And so he is now king. And he addresses her kindly with a proper address and says woman.

But he's addressing her from an ordained position to help her recognize the status. And literally, it says, what to me and to you. It was a figure of speech basically saying, don't worry about it.

I've got this. I'll handle it. Which I'm sure she knew he would. But one wonders if she really understood what he was going to do.

[13:34] You see, again, we have here in this section a picture of the official capacity that Jesus has as the ordained king who has come to save his people.

And when it's for his glory, the Lord will always perform God's will for your best. And so he does here. Does that here. He tells her, my hour has not yet come.

He doesn't mean don't bother me now because it's not my time to do anything. But rather, the hour has not come was a reference to the hour at the end of his ministry.

And at the end of his ministry, he will say, my hour has come. And he was talking about the cross. And that was the biggest sign of all.

This was the beginning of the signs that Jesus did in verse 11. It says this was the very beginning of. And there are, again, seven different signs.

[14:38] So he tells them, he tells the servants, you know, to gather, to take the stone pots. They were stone. They're not clay because you didn't want to get the water dirty. And the stone pots were used specifically for times of cleaning yourself, washing, bathing, sometimes for drinking, storing drink water.

But oftentimes for ceremonial uses. Like they called washings were really baptisms. And so they would have washings to dedicate themselves and clean themselves before times of worship.

And they were about 20 or 30 gallons, kind of like the size of your average garbage can, but made out of stone and probably quite beautiful.

And Jesus has them fill all the way up. And there was usually one ceremonial pot per family. So they had gathered several. It was a common utensil in the Old Testament that they would understand, or the Jews would later understand, pointed to the promise of Messiah to come.

[15:53] So Jesus is taking this sign, this promise, and he's going to use it to teach them something very important. Tells them fill it up. So in verses 6 through 9, we kind of have a picture of the church where Jesus and the disciples, his brothers, his mom, you know, and Jesus makes a bountiful, very expensive gift out of the ordinary in order to supply the needs of his people.

He takes something ordinary and it makes it extraordinary. And he does it for his people because he loves his people. He hasn't changed.

Jesus is that way today. He will take the ordinary and make it extraordinary in his due time. So why is this sign, this miracle at a wedding?

I mean, what's the big deal? Well, the event itself is a marker, a pointer to the promises of the Old Testament, because in the Old Testament, we have many different verses that point to the fact that when Messiah comes, he's going to do it like a feast at a wedding.

And he's going to celebrate with his people like at a wedding. In fact, he, Jesus even will tell parables of weddings. That was a promise.

[17:15] And they knew that when the Messiah came, he's going to celebrate and have feasts and parties like weddings. So he starts with this.

Amos 9, 13. And behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord. And the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes. Him who sows seed when the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved.

And I will restore the captivity of my people Israel. And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine and make gardens and eat their fruit.

And I will plant them on their land and they will not again be rooted out from their land, says the Lord. Jeremiah 31 is another passage where he predicts that he will bring promises of rescue to his people.

And when he does with this Messiah, they're going to celebrate. They're going to party. So Jesus is the one who comes, who turns a possible catastrophe into a blessing.

[18:23] You see, this is the kind of Jesus, this is the kind of God that we have. He didn't have to do that for this family. Did he? He didn't even have to go to the wedding.

But he did. More than likely, he knew what was going to happen. But he was kind enough to be able to supply the needs of these people. He deliberately provided in such a way that they rejoiced with dance and the people turned mourning into joy.

He gave the best gift. The best gift. Not only to the people, but to the groom and the bride and the host.

Now, what's the point? That Jesus is the one, the God who provides for the needs of his people. He does that today. He's not some force.

He's not some unrelational thing that's out there. He is personal. He is with us and he's for us.

[19:32] He gives us everything we need for life and for godliness. He has the best. For us. His best.

Just as a reminder, Jesus steps into the shoes and responsibility of the groom to make the provision. The groom and his father were responsible to have the wine and the food and, you know, the hors d'oeuvres and, you know, the delicious salmon and, you know, caviar and all that.

And Jesus takes over the role as the groomsmen. And he provides for them. Something we can look forward to at the wedding feast of the lamb.

There are two other things here about this, the wedding. First, the very fact that he transformed the water into wine, making it the best was miraculous. I mean, who can do that?

Magician, you know, could probably pull it off. And still, it was fake. But how do you pour water into these big, huge containers?

[20:43] And then the servants are there. And as soon as they dip into it, you know, to go and pass it out, it comes out as wine. That's a miracle.

That's a big miracle. As the coming joy of Messiah, as promised in Isaiah 25 and Hosea 2 and Zechariah 9 and so many other places, he's doing exactly what was predicted in the old.

He's a good, good God. The second reason, you know, that we see here is that he didn't use wineskins, which they often did.

He didn't use wineskins because he makes the ceremonial pot somewhat of an object lesson. You see, one of the main points of having a ceremonial pot filled with water is when you prepared yourself to worship God, to go to a worship feast, or to do other acts of service before the Lord. Or because, you know, for whatever reason, you needed to be cleansed, you would use the water, pray over it and so forth, and you would use the water to cleanse yourself, to bathe yourself, so that you would be pure, so to speak.

[22 : 02] At least ceremonially pure and ready to come before God. The wine in the Old Testament was also a symbol of purity.

And what happens here is the water with which God's people were made clean would become the fruit of Jesus' crushed life. Because it's pointing to a time when he himself would be crushed, ground under, so to speak, and his life would pour out his blood to cleanse us from our sins. Very significant. Very significant. So it's not just the water into the wine. It's the ceremony and it's the meaning behind it. So we know what shall wash away my sin, but nothing but the blood of Jesus.

You see, it's in Christ that we are made clean. It's in Christ, not in what you do or what you say then or now. It's not in how much you, how many rules you fulfill or if you dress a particular way or don't dress a particular way.

Whether you go to Target or Walmart or, you know, this grocery store or the local market. You know, it's not in all those things that we might believe is important that makes us holy.

[23 : 24] It's Jesus who makes us holy. It's not even in the law of God because the law is not what makes us holy. It's Christ in his blood.

It's his life that was crushed for us. It's given for us. That makes us clean. There's nothing that we can do to purify ourselves.

So from here on, we see who this Jesus is. From here on, John in the Gospels make it clear that Jesus is not only the fulfillment of the wine that will wash us, that will be like the Holy Spirit that will cleanse us, but he is the bread of life, right?

Then in verse 11, it says in this way, Jesus made known or was a witness to his glory. I don't believe they really got what was going on then.

And, you know, it was the servants who went around and told, they evangelized, so to speak, because they told the good news of what the Messiah had just done. And they said, say, what?

[24 : 30] What happened? You know, the groom and his father and the family and the members and the bride and all that, scratching their heads, trying to figure out what does this mean?

All they knew is their immediate need, their honor, the provision, all that was provided for. They loved Jesus because he came to the rescue. They didn't get the existential, the other transcendent ideas and the meaning behind it yet.

Not until the cross. And then in verse 12, it says, after this, he went down, literally, he traveled down to Capernaum, his mother, his brothers, and his six disciples.

This is Jesus. This is Christ. He's not the guy who's out to get us. He's the one who's out to give to us.

[25 : 32] He shows his interest in normal things of life. He wants us to celebrate the fruit of our labor as we offer it up to the Lord. He delights to see us joyful and blessed.

Can you imagine that? He wants to see us happy. And in Christ, we have abundant life. When it's for his glory, the Lord will perform God's will for your good.

But in Christ, he works all things out for our good. He often turns catastrophe into blessing. Sometimes it lasts a long time before the blessing comes.

But in Christ, we're rescued and we're saved. He cares about your honor. He will defend your name. He will come to your rescue.

In Christ, you are made whole. He provides for your needs. In Christ, you have everything you need. But in Christ, you are always made clean forever and made holy.

[26 : 38] That's the Jesus that we know and we worship and we come to love. Our Father God, thank you for Jesus. Thank you that he came.

The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity who came down to earth to become a man for us. Who is the Messiah, the Savior King. Who came to live the life that we could not live.

To fulfill the law perfectly because we could not do that. And then to die on the cross to pay for our guilt, our shame, our sins. We praise you for that.

We thank you that he was and is just as concerned about what seems to be the normal mundane things in life. As he is with the great eternal things in life.

We praise you for that, Father. Help us to reflect on that in our day-to-day walk this week. Whether it's a good day or a bad day throughout the week. And always know that Jesus has our best interest at heart.

[27 : 41] And that he loves us. And he wants us to have joy. Amen. Let's grab the hymn book for this one.

Here is, uh, subject number right there. Hymn number 45. Surely, goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.

Will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. You say amen to that? Amen. Okay, let's stand, please, for surely, goodness and mercy. A pilgrim was I and the one queen
In the cold night of sin I did wrong
When Jesus the kind shepherd found me
And now I am on the way home
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days, all the days of my life
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever
And now I am on the way home
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life
All the days, all the days of my life
He glorieth my soul when I'm weary
He giveth me strength day by day
He leads me beside the still waters

He guards me each step of my life
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life
My Savior will walk through the dark, monsombred valley
My Savior will walk through the dark, monsombred valley
And safely His great hand will lead me
To the land of sin, He's gone to prepare
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

[31 : 37] All the days, all the days, all the days of my life
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life
And I shall dwell in the house of my life
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever
And I shall feast at the table, pray for me
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life
Amen.