

16-22 January 2022 John2: 1-11

All in God's time

Read the passage from John. It is written below.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Bible notes

It can be tempting, as people shaped in part by the scientific and cynical culture we live in, to read a well-known miracle story such as this one with great suspicion. Perhaps, we say, it is nothing more than a conjuring trick. Or we might think that people 'back then' were just more credulous than us. This doesn't do justice to the miracle of water changed into wine. Consider, for example, the person whose job it was to taste the wine. This 'first drinker' or 'steward' is no naïve fool, easily tricked. When he is offered the new wine, his first reaction is to come up with a rational explanation: given that people serve the good wine first, and then the poor wine once everyone is drunk, this must mean that the host is exceptionally generous!

The power of the miracle lies not in how it was brought about, but in what it shows us about Jesus as God's Son. In the middle of an ordinary event, a wedding, God reveals his unprecedented hospitality. God upends the expectations. In the ordinary run of things, the best wine is served first; in God's reality, our expectations are turned upside down. The miracle happens on 'the third day'. It is a foreshadowing of God's definitive work of love: the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after his crucifixion. In John's Gospel, miracles always proclaim God's love for us in the middle of our ordinary lives.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

John's Gospel makes repeated use of the notion of the 'third day'. It is a feature of Jesus' first miracle in John as well as, for example, the raising of Lazarus – and, of course, the Resurrection of Jesus. The 'third day' matters for John because it ties all the major miracles to God raising Jesus from the dead. What would it mean for us to act as people of the third day? If today is 'day one', then day three is 'the day after tomorrow'. People sometimes say, 'You never know what tomorrow may bring.' How much more is that true of the day after tomorrow? If we are people of the third day, what does this tell us about hope in God?

Questions for reflection

You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues of sharing.



Questions

- How do you feel when you are waiting for something to change?
- What ordinary things, in your life, would you like God to transform?
- And in your community, what ordinary things would you like God to transform?

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

A prayer of approach

In the middle of the longest and darkest month of the year,
on an ordinary Sunday, bereft of celebration or feast,
we come to you, O God of change and transformation,
seeking a drop of the divine, a glimpse of your glory.

Transform our day by changing our way of seeing, we pray.

Amen.

A prayer to end the Bible study

May Jesus Christ,
changer of water into wine,
taker of the ordinary in our lives,
transform us for his glory,
and make us extraordinary for his sake.

Let us go out from here
with God's miraculous grace brimming up inside us,
taking with us that abundance of love and power,
and sharing it with everyone we meet.

Amen.