

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 23 February 2025

**Sermon Title** : Jesus: The Stories - The First

**Speaker** : Rev Shannon Chan

**Text** : John 2:1-11

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Weddings during Jesus' time were often week-long events to which everyone in town was invited. At such weddings, it was not just embarrassing to run out of wine but it seemed it was a serious violation of a strong unwritten social code that could result in bankruptcy if someone chose to take legal action. And here is where Jesus enters the scene. Jesus chose to respond to this distressing need even though He did respond to His mother when she talked to Him about it, "Woman, why do you involve Me? It is not My time." But it is here we see the first miracle of Cana.

### **The first miracle at Cana represents:**

#### **A. The first Foreshadowing of God's Grace**

This presence of Jesus and His action of turning the water into wine when the bridegroom felt helpless as there seemed to be no way out, was a taste of God's grace. Jesus was a guest at the wedding and He was not obliged to help the groom. Similarly, Jesus has no obligation to help us out when we face difficult situations where there seem to be no way out, but He does, and He comes, and that is when God's grace becomes evident.

- God's grace is undeserved favour. He gives us undeserved favour not because He is obliged to but because He knows we need it. As a Christian writer points out, the first miracle at Cana represents the first foreshadowing of God's grace - Jesus Christ coming. Coming in the flesh, 'Emmanuel, God with us' coming to save and redeem people for their own good even when they did not think they needed any deliverance and saving. He came nonetheless because He knew they had a need which they did not know about. God gives us grace that our sins may be forgiven. His gift to us of new beginnings.

#### **B. The first Foreshadowing of God's New Covenant**

The first miracle did not just save the wedding from disaster, it was also the first foreshadowing of God's New Covenant. We see this in the form of the wine itself when the new wine was presented to the master of the banquet – It was considered new wine because the first round of wine had come and gone, and it was a superior quality of wine; different and much better. The wine produced by Jesus was significantly

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different and much better than the wine that the groom had initially provided. The kind of water Jesus used to turn into wine was no ordinary water. The Bible tells us that the water was put in six stone jars which were used by the Jews for ceremonial washing. It was the kind of water used by Jews under the Old Covenant for ritual cleansing before entering the Temple. They needed this water for them to be cleansed in order to draw near to God before they entered into His presence. Jesus intentionally used the water in these jars used for cleansing to foreshadow His blood as the requirement for us to draw near to God even though the people and His disciples did not know it at that time. It was new wine that filled the water jars.

- During the Last Supper that Jesus had with His disciples, the cup of wine was spoken of as God's New Covenant in Jesus' blood (1 Corinthians 11:25). Jesus was teaching that it will be the new wine of His blood that will cleanse us, deliver us from sin and shame, and restore us to God. People would be saved by grace through faith beyond only the nation of Israel which was under the Old Covenant. Now people from every nation, tribe, and tongue who trust Jesus can become a part of God's covenant family.

We can never repay God for His kindness and acts of mercy, but we should not lose sight of the fact that the blessings of God's covenant are in fact conditional. To receive His covenant blessings, two conditions need to be met:

- Love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength
- Keep fully His Commandments

Someone said that in a relationship to God, love and obedience go hand in hand like two sides of the same coin. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love Me, obey My Commandments." Obedience is not a passive act but an active expression of faith. When we trust Jesus and do what He says, He transforms our lives in ways beyond our imagination.

In summarizing the miracle in Cana, David Harrell suggests, the first miracle points to not only Christ as the One who can create all things physical, but also the One who creates all things new spiritually. In a way, Jesus is saying, "I am going to fill it with wine that symbolizes the cleansing redeeming power of My blood. I am bringing the new wine of the Kingdom."

But the new wine entails beyond cleansing forgiveness and making us a new creation though this is enormously important. A writer shares that, beyond this:

**The New Wine tied to God's New Covenant also includes the receiving of God's Spirit. We can live the transformed life by:**

## **1. Saying Yes to the Power of the Holy Spirit**

It is impossible to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit. In 2 Timothy 1:7, the Apostle Paul spoke to Timothy, "For God has not given you a spirit of fear but of power

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and of love and of a sound mind.” From Paul’s encouragement to Timothy who was young, inexperienced and timid and leading a church while not in the best of health, we’re reminded that through faith we have the strength to face life’s challenges and overcome fear, not in our own might but through God’s power given by God’s Spirit.

Apostle Paul mentions the Spirit we have in us is one of power. The word ***dunamis*** (from which the word dynamite is derived) means power. The Lord provides us with an explosive power that allows us to be effective in carrying out the purpose and mission of the church without fear. This is the same power that raised Christ from the dead and enabled the apostles to carry out the Great Commission in the Book of Acts. Just like Timothy, we need to be constantly strengthened and reminded that hope in the midst of challenges and fear begins with understanding that the same power that accomplished these great things continually dwells within us. This power should not be misused. It is not coercive or destructive but stabilizes and energizes as we live and spread the total Gospel. The Holy Spirit indwells us to give this power, and it is not arrogance but assurance when we need to stand for what is true and right. Even when we are alone, we are not alone when we do God’s work God’s way, when we proclaim His word. When we represent truly His Kingdom, we have God’s power supporting us and we are kept safe in His hands.

## **2. Saying Yes to the Love of the Holy Spirit**

We can be transformed by saying yes to the love of the Holy Spirit. God loves His children as much as He loves Jesus (John 17:23). When we come to know we are beloved by God as Jesus, the Son of God is beloved, and comprehend the length, width, height and depth of His love, it becomes our unshakable foundation. It also sets us free from insecurity, depression and gloom. With His Spirit of love which is already within us, we can pour love into places that need His soothing balm. When you and I have faith in God’s perfect love for us, we are freed to love others with His love.

God’s love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23). 1 Corinthians 13 points us to what true love should be. Without love, all we do is noisy and obnoxious like walking around clanging a cymbal.

As situations arise, we need to love truly because truth without love is just noise and love without truth is inadequate. We need both love and truth. The nature of love as the Son of God who embodied it is Christ-like agape love. Pastor Ray Stedman explains that Christ-like agape love is the decision to act for the benefit of another person no matter how you feel about that person. Christ-like love is deliberate, decisive, firm, kind but not manipulated. It is not indulgent nor is it weak as many people mistakenly think. Agape love does not just forgive people but also holds people accountable. As someone once said, love that is too timid to hold wrongdoers accountable for their own good and for the good of other is “sloppy agape”. Apostle Paul said that love does not delight in evil but it rejoices with the truth. The love Jesus

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commands is a decision, not a feeling. It is clear eyed and realistic and always seeks the highest good for the person being loved, even in the most extreme and unlovely situations, even if the person being loved rejects it.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Wedding in Cana likely serves as a foretaste of the soon coming Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9). As surely as brides plan and prepare for their wedding, we must make ourselves ready as well. Being confident that Christ is preparing His eternal Kingdom for those of us who love Him and long for His return is not an invitation for us to sit and do nothing but is meant to spur us toward living a life of holiness, being faithful to all He commands. Because Christ intends to present us pure without spot or blemish, we should participate in the preparation by putting off anything that is unfitting as Christ's bride while we await our glorious reunion with Him, and engage in a mission that extends the invitation to all to join God's covenant family. The Gospel invitations we make are steps towards that final celebration when all of God's people will be united in His presence.

## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?
  
- 2a. How has learning that Jesus' first miracle at Cana represents the first foreshadowing of God's grace and the first foreshadowing of God's New Covenant impacted you?
- 2b. What is your personal reflection regarding the miracle Jesus performed at the wedding at Cana?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

3. Read John 2:1-11 reflectively. What does Jesus' demonstration of God's grace at the wedding at Cana tell you about:
    - a. (i) God?
    - (ii) man?
  - b. If you are going through a difficult situation feeling helpless and hopeless, how does this truth encourage you to live?
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4. In 1 Corinthians 11:25, Jesus taught that it will be the new wine of His blood that will cleanse us, deliver us from sin and shame, and restore us to God.
    - a. Are you fulfilling the 2 conditions to receive God's covenant blessing as stated in John 14:15?
    - b. If you are not, or unsure, what is one thing you can do and how can your group members encourage and support you to do so?
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- 5a. Have you said "Yes" to the power and love (agape) of the Holy Spirit which is tied to God's New Covenant? If yes, share how it has transformed you. If not, what is holding you back?
  - 5b. What do you/your group need to do to receive the power in 2 Timothy 1:7 to empower you/your group as you embark on M25 this year?
  - 5c. Identify a person/persons that you can pour God's agape love to in the week ahead and commit to doing it.
  - 5d. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 5a, 5b and 5c in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

6. Share and give thanks to God for how the power of the Holy Spirit has enabled you to engage in a mission that extends the invitation to all to join God's covenant family towards that final celebration when all of God's people will be united in His presence.

OR

Give thanks to God for His agape love. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to love with truth, seeking the highest good for the person being loved even if the person being loved rejects it.

6. With a prayer partner, pray for the action steps/changes you have committed to in question 3, 4 and 5 above, surrendering your fears and challenges to God, trusting in His grace. Sincerely say 'Yes' to receive the power and love of the Holy Spirit and pray for His help to keep each other accountable as you prepare to live in holiness and engage in God's mission for the return of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

### Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Lion and the Lamb – Leeland  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9ujBoud26k&ab\\_channel=BethelMusic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9ujBoud26k&ab_channel=BethelMusic)
2. His Glory and My Good – CityAlight  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yQ42RU3Nh8&ab\\_channel=HumberUBF](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yQ42RU3Nh8&ab_channel=HumberUBF)
3. New Wine – Hillsong  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbJaM\\_EneMw&ab\\_channel=HillsongWorship](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbJaM_EneMw&ab_channel=HillsongWorship)

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