

Week of April 15-21

WINE SIGN

Scripture Reading: Read John chapter 2

Healing the blind, deaf and mute? Check. Making the lame walk? Check. Cleansing lepers? Check. Feeding the multitudes? Check. Walking on water, casting out demons, raising the dead? Check, check and check again! All miracles Jesus performed multiple times according to the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Turning water into wine? Now that's a miracle we haven't seen before! John, alone, is the only gospel writer to include this miracle, and, for him, it was a significant event. John testifies in verse 11 that it was through this miracle that Jesus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him. John also informs us in the same verse that this was the first miraculous sign Jesus performed. Did you catch that? Turning water into wine was Jesus' first miracle. It wasn't casting out demons, healing the sick or raising the dead. It was meeting the need for wine at a wedding feast that he and his disciples attended in Cana of Galilee.

Why would Jesus make this his first miracle? Was it because his mother asked him to help? Although some commentators have suggested this, it seems unlikely in light of his response to his mother in verse 4, "*Dear woman, why do you involve me?*" Jesus replied. "*My time has not yet come.*" Or was it, as other commentators assert, because Jesus and his disciples crashed the wedding party uninvited and this resulted in the host running out of wine creating a situation which Jesus felt an obligation to correct? Not likely, since weddings in the 1st century were a community affair and it was expected that the host would provide for all attending.

So, what's going on here? Why did this miracle occur? Is there possibly more here than meets the eye? Perhaps an answer is found in the way John describes this event: "the first of his miraculous signs." John prefers the word "signs" to describe Jesus' miracles. They weren't just miracles of power as an end in and of themselves. Rather, they were signs pointing beyond themselves to something more important.

If this is the case here, then what is the sign conveying? Turning water into wine could be seen as a word picture of the power of Jesus to turn sinners into saints. It is probably for this reason that it is the first sign miracle to occur. From the outset of John's gospel, we're introduced to both the power and plan of Jesus, the Son of God. Although a practical need is met at the wedding, a greater message is conveyed of Jesus' power to transform the lives of those who put their faith in him, something the disciples did following the miracle.

One last thought to ponder: the host recognized the superiority of the wine Jesus created in the natural realm. The life Jesus gives in the spiritual realm is far superior, as well, to anything we could produce with our own efforts.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Read II Corinthians 5:17 and reflect on how Paul's statement there connects to Jesus' miracle here. Thank God for his transforming power in your life.

Take-away: *The Wine Sign reveals Jesus' power to transform sinners into saints.*