

**Sermon Title: Celebrate the Wedding Supper of the Lamb****Bible Passage: John 2:1-11****Introduction:**

People love new things. New gadgets. New year. New AFL season. New beginnings. New opportunities. New things indicate a second chance or better options. If you were disappointed by yesterday's game, it's okay, because there is a new season, and there is a new chance to win the premiership. We come closer to the end of year and you might not have been successful in any of your new year's resolutions. But that's okay as well because you can try again in the new year. New things don't necessarily mean better, but in the case of what Jesus brings, it is definitely better. What Jesus brings in the New Testament is infinitely better. It is better than the new gadgets or new year or AFL season. He brings new life through who he is and what he does. And it is through the New Covenant we receive it. And tonight, we will see how by seeing his glory.

**Context:**

John 20:30-31 says, <sup>30</sup> *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;* <sup>31</sup> *but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

John organises his book around the signs of Jesus as a way to show his glory. More specifically he writes about *7 signs of Jesus*, and we will look at them eventually. The wedding of Cana is Jesus' first sign and it is the commencement of Jesus' ministry. At the end of this story in verse 11 it tells us that this was the first of his signs... and through this particular situation, Jesus' glory is manifested. We could take the obvious manifestation of glory as Jesus the one who performs miracles. We could talk about Jesus the one who is able to change water to wine as a reflection of the power of God. How Jesus changed the molecular structure of water to the best wine in town. But I think we would miss John's point in this story. There are three interesting elements of the story that should pop out to us when we read it. And they teach us something important about the person and work of Jesus Christ. And when we see this, then we will see how he manifested his glory. And by God's grace and the power of the work of the Holy Spirit, we will grow in a deeper appreciation of who Jesus is and what he has done.

1. Glory of the Obedient Son of God (v1-5)
2. Glory of the New Covenant Purifier (v6-8)
3. Glory of the Perfect Bridegroom (v9-10)

### **1. Glory of the Obedient Son of God (v1-5)**

“<sup>1</sup>On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.” Verse 1-2 gives us the context of our story.

Three days after Jesus had called Philip and Nathanael, 6 days after John the Baptist had testified that he was not the Christ, Jesus is now back at Galilee and he is invited to a wedding. Interestingly, in verse 1, we are told that “the mother of Jesus was there” and so we are anticipating that Mary is going to play a part in this story.

Now weddings are a big deal. They partied hard. It was common for weddings to last a long time. Some would celebrate for as long as a week. Guests would travel far and stay for days. They would eat and drink and be merry. It was a joyous occasion. And here in this wedding Jesus performs the first of his signs and manifested his glory in front of friends and family.

Verse 3 tells us the wine runs out and Mary the mother of Jesus comes to Jesus and tells him “They have no wine.”. She obviously is playing some role in facilitating the food and drinks. She has an important role to play to make sure this joyous occasion isn’t ruined. If you have no wine in a wedding in Australia some people might complain, and you might not have people dancing in your reception. Having no wine historically is a big problem. It is a serious problem if wine ran out. It reflected poorly on the bridegroom. Legal action could be taken by the bride’s family. If you had not provided a celebration and party that the father of the bride felt his daughter deserved, you would be in trouble. The bride is entitled to a perfect wedding. And we all know how it would feel if your wedding doesn’t go to plan. There is a serious problem in this wedding. No more wine. And Mary goes to Jesus with this problem. Obviously, she wants him to do something about it. She wants Jesus to fix the problem.

And then in verse 4 we are to be shocked by Jesus’ reply.

<sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”

The ESV translates it as Woman. Woman. Now we know Jesus isn't being rude. He isn't being disrespectful. Maybe an appropriate translation would be "Dear woman" like the NIV. Some commentators translate it as "Madam or good woman". Regardless of how you see it, you are to be shocked by his response and stop and ask what he is doing here. There is an obvious contrast given. John has been calling Mary as "The mother of Jesus" for a reason. And Jesus on the flip side has called her Woman. He corrects her by saying "what does this have to do with me?". We ask the question, why doesn't Jesus say, "Mother"? Why doesn't he just say, "I will go change some water into wine" which he will end up doing? Jesus purposely separates himself from his mother, his earthly relationship and her purposes and brings us to a heavenly relationship and purpose. "My hour has not yet come" draws our attention to Jesus's mission which is the mission of the Heavenly Father. In the Gospel of John, Jesus makes clear to his disciples, his family and everyone his purpose and why he does what he does.

John 5:17 and 19 together says, *"<sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." ... <sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise."*- Jesus the Son does nothing out of his own accord, but only what the father wills and does.

John 8:28-29 says, *"I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him"* He speaks and acts on the authority of the Father. Jesus the son is interested in pleasing the Father.

And again, in John 12:49-50, *"For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me"*.

And finally, in John 14:31, Jesus promises the holy spirit and he concludes the section by saying, *"But I do as the Father has commanded me, so that world may know that I love the Father..."* Jesus, the Son of God loves the Father. He is obedient to him. And the mission that he has will not be hindered by anything. Even his earthly relationships. Jesus makes that clear. In the Gospel of Mark 3:32-34, people came to his house and they said, *"Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.'* *And he answered them, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking about at*

*those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers!''*. Jesus looks to the family of faith not his earthly relationship.

At the beginning of his ministry, in the midst of a joyous celebration, Jesus is focused on the cross. He is focussed on his hour of crucifixion, where he takes the wrath of God for sinners.

That's great news that Jesus is an obedient Son. Through his obedience, he dies on the cross for our sins. Because his perfect obedience he can be the perfect lamb of God that is slain for us. Because he is perfectly obedient to the Father, nothing will hinder him to do what the Father wills. That means there is no favouritism even for Jesus' mother. Because what matters most to the obedient son, is faith in the obedient son of God. What brings you into a correct and righteous relationship with God is not your perfect obedience or your perfect family, but perfect relationship and obedience found in the Son of God. Thanks be to God, that we have a saviour who is perfectly obedient when we are not. Thanks be to God that we have the Son who glorifies the Father through his obedience (John 17:4).

Through this conversation we see a part of Jesus' glory through his obedience and commitment to the Father. You can be assured that Jesus is committed to the father's will and his promise. And you can hold fast to them! See the Glory of the Obedient Son.

## **2. Glory of the New Covenant Purifier (v6-8)**

What is interesting is that fact that although Jesus makes it clear where his allegiance lies, Mary responds in faith to Jesus in verse 5 by telling the servants to, "do whatever he tells you". She realises that Jesus will do what he thinks is best but also expects that he will do something. She doesn't know what he will do but he will save the day! Verse 6 tells us there is 6 stone water jars for Jewish rites of purifications, each holding 20-30 gallons which is about 75-115 litres each. That's a lot of water. And what Jesus does is he gets the servants to fill the jars with water. And notice that verse 7 says that they "filled them up to the brim". He didn't add some wine at the end. It was pure water in Jewish purification jars. Not wine. Then in verse 8, Jesus tells them "draw some out and take it to the master of the feast". And a miracle happens. The Master of the feast tastes it and is surprised because it is tastes like the best wine of the night. The water has become wine. A miracle. Now

there is a reason why John adds the details that the jars that were filled with water is for Jewish rites of purifications.

Judaism put ceremonial cleanliness in such high regards that they would not eat unless they had washed! Mark 7:1-4 gives us insight in how they viewed these traditions. *“1 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, 2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, 4 and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches)”*. They thought that all these tradition, cleaning of hands, cups, pots, copper vessels, dining couches would enable them to be clean. We know for sure that the pharisees emphasised these as an outward show. Although they may be clean from the outside, they were not clean in the inside. Just because they had washed everything, it didn't mean they had inward cleansing or transformation. They weren't washed clean from their sins because of their commitment to their traditions.

The sad reality is, people pursue cleanliness or purity in all sorts of ways. In Shintoism and some forms of Buddhism, dirtiness is associated with evil. Cleanliness is associated with good. That's why if you look at some Asian cultures, they go to great depths to keep themselves clean as well their house. I am not saying being clean and having your house clean is bad. But for some this was a way to pursue purity. To be rid of evil and sin. If you go to Buddhist temples you will see incense. In Shamanism they use sage. There's a whole range of different traditions which people use to ward off evil and dirtiness. This type of thinking isn't foreign in the church today. People within the church look for cleansing in all sorts of ways. Some think that by doing good works, God will forgive their sins and they will be righteous before him. It is very tempting to trust in your gifts and talents, and what you do for the church and God as a means to which you measure your holiness and purity. Some look to Legalism. Many people look to self-help programs.

All these can't purify you. Only the blood of Jesus can. Jesus points to himself as the only way to be purified. His own death, washing of his blood is the only way to be cleansed. And so, what Jesus does here is he is essentially saying that he is taking the purification rituals of Judaism and replacing them with the only way which one can be purified. By the New Covenant in Jesus where there is purification. In John

6:53-55 Jesus makes it clear that you need the blood of Christ. You need to be washed in his blood. *<sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink."* So, although he says to Mary that his time has not come, he has pointed to that time/that hour through this miracle. Jesus is the New Covenant Purifier. 1 John 1:7, John uses the same word as purification, *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."* We know we are in the track as well when we look at the messages of the next few passages. Temple worship replaced with true worship in the resurrected Christ. The new place of worship. (When Jesus cleanses the temple). In Chapter 3 New Birth, regeneration by the Holy Spirit. New life and New Creation. And then in Chapter 4, Jesus and the Samaritan woman. People sustained not by a well which does not fully satisfy but sustained by the living water of Christ. We are looking forward then to the promises in the New Covenant. Jesus is the New Covenant Purifier.

Last year, Garam and I had to the opportunity to go back to my birth country, New Zealand. We drove many hours south from Auckland to a tourist attraction called, "Waitomo Caves". There are a lot of caves in that area with glow worms. One of the caves we went to was called Aranui Cave. You enter through this big metal door and you walk a few metres and there you enter into this huge spiral walk way which goes down. Its mysteriously beautiful. When we went got to the bottom there is this stone looking thing which has water dripping on it from the top of the cave. Our guide told us that this water purifies and cleans us before we enter the sacred cave. Everyone had some cave water but Garam and I didn't because we know that nothing can purify us. Nothing can clean us from our sins and our unrighteousness except the blood of Jesus. What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again nothing, but the blood of Jesus. Only he can make me white as snow before his judgement throne. And that's good news because everyone is sinful. Everyone has done things which they regret. Some people feel dirty in the inside. And they can shower all they like. They can bathe all they like, but they will still feel dirty. A shower or two can't wash you clean. But thanks be to God that the blood of Jesus can. There is hope for all who come to the cross and is washed by the blood. And so today if you feel dirty, if you feel unclean, if you feel that you could never be forgiven, know for sure that you can. Not from some

purification jar, not by doing family or cultural traditions, but only by the blood of Jesus. And so, there is Glory in the New Covenant Purifier.

**Finally,**

### **3. Glory of the Perfect Bridegroom (v9-10)**

*<sup>9</sup>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 the feast called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>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."*

The interesting thing about verse 9-10 is that the bridegroom was responsible for providing everything for the wedding. And he BLEW IT! He was inadequate. He was not perfect. He failed to do everything that was in his power to make sure it went right. All the wine ran out. Even the bad wine. The master of the feasts comment cannot be attributed to bridegroom in this wedding. The compliment and praise can only be attributed to the one who provided the wine for the feast. Jesus the Son of God. And what we have here is a taste of who he is as a bridegroom. One of the images for the Kingdom of God is a wedding banquet/feast. The true church, the people of God is the bride. And the bridegroom is Christ. We looked at Ephesians at the beginning of the year and we saw that that Human Marriage is reflection of Christ's permanent union with his Church. Ephesians 5:31 quotes Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one."". then in Verse 32, Paul says, "This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church.". The relationship between the husband and wife is linked to the fact that Christ is the head of Church and he is the bridegroom of the church. He has and will continue to look after his bride. Because he is the perfect bridegroom. He has self-sacrificially given his life for his bride. He continues to forgive them although they fall short of his glory. And he has and will continue to provide for them. And when he comes again to take his bride, there will be a wedding banquet. In contrast to this broken and hard world, where there is famine, wars, death and pain, when Christ comes again, there will a celebration like no other. Isaiah 25:6-8 puts it this way,

*<sup>6</sup>On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.<sup>7</sup> And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever;*

*and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken."*

A feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine! A feast greater than a wedding banquet in this earth full of cognac, caviar, truffle, wagyu beef or fresh Japanese fatty tuna. It is a wedding banquet which Christ will give the best. Because in that banquet there will be complete joy. No more sin. Death swallowed up forever. And the presence of God will be there.

John in Revelation calls it the Wedding supper of the lamb. This will happen when Jesus comes back to bring his perfect work to consummation. Revelation 19:6-8, *"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—*

And in verse 9 the angel said to him, *"Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb"*. It is a blessed thing to be partakers of the marriage supper of Lamb indeed. Will you be at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Will you see his glory and believe? You need to, because if you are not part of the marriage supper of the Lamb, then you are in eternal condemnation.

[I love seeing faithful marriages and weddings. Because faithful and loving marriages and Christ-centred weddings, reflect Christ and the Church. There is a couple which I admire. The wife suffers from dementia and its hard. Yet the husband loves her so much. He looks after her day and night. He continues to smile and be filled with Joy and thankfulness to God for her. I asked a few weeks ago what has God been teaching him. He told me that God had taught him that he really loves his wife and that God really loves him. As his love for his wife grows during this time, he is reminded of Christ's unending love for him. And that's exactly the bridegroom the church needs. The perfect bridegroom. The reality is, the church is not perfect. The people in the church is not perfect. But we have a perfect Bridegroom who saved us. We look to him for salvation and joy. ]

### **Conclusion:**

I love new things. I love the new covenant the most and all that God promises through it. Thanks be to God that he reveals to us his glory through the Obedient Son of God, the New Covenant Purifier and the Perfect Bridegroom. All you need to do is see his glory and believe.