

Bible Stories for Adults

Water to Wine

John 2:1-11

Opening

Gathering: Share examples of God's miraculous powers at work today.

Today's Focus: Three days after calling His first disciples, Jesus revealed His glory through a miracle and they put their faith in Him.

Key Verses: *He thus revealed His glory, and His disciples put their faith in Him.* John 2:11

These are written 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 20:31

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Timing of this Story in Jesus' Ministry (*John 1*)

What events had already happened in Jesus' ministry? = List on board

Luke 3:21-22 = He was anointed with the Spirit and called by the Father (Baptism)

Luke 3:23a = About 30 years old (Numbers 4:3 - age priests began serving in temple)

Luke 4:1-2a = Went into the desert, fasted for 40 days and was tempted by Satan

John 1:29-31 = John pointed out Jesus as the one he was preparing Israel for

John 1:35-37 = Andrew and John began following Jesus the next day

John 1:41-42 = Andrew brought brother Simon to Jesus, Jesus named him *Rock*

John 1:43 = Next day went to Galilee, Met and called Philip

John 1:45, 49 = Philip found Nathanael and brought him to Jesus

Glory on the Third Day (*John 2:11*)

What did Jesus promise to Nathanael after his confession of faith?

John 1:50 = *You shall see greater things...*

What is the next story of Jesus' ministry and why did it happen?

John 2:11 = Miracle at Cana; To reveal His glory, to build His disciples' faith

How long had these disciples been with Him before He revealed His glory at Cana?

John 2:1-2 = It was on the third day since the earlier story

What other time did Jesus reveal His glory to His disciples on the third day?

John 20:1, 19-20 = Appeared to disciples in room the day of His resurrection

Did the "disciples" at Cana include all of Jesus' select 12? = 12 apostles, many disciples

Luke 6:12-13, 17, 20 = Appointed 12 apostles before Sermon on Mount (1+ yr later)

Which were likely included?

John 1:40-41, 43-45 = Andrew, Simon, John (James?), Philip, Nathanael

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The Location of this Story (*John 2:1*)

What big city did Jesus choose to first reveal His glory?

John 2:1 = Cana, small Galilee town, 4 miles NE of Nazareth

Why didn't Jesus focus His ministry in big cities with big people?

Luke 4:43 = Jesus was sent to ordinary people in ordinary places

How did people from Cana and Nazareth feel about each other? = John 21:2 - Nathanael from Cana

John 1:46 = Didn't believe anything good could come from Nazareth (rival town?)

Did anything else significant happen in Cana? = Second miracle after coming to Galilee from Judea

John 4:46-54 = Jesus healed official's dying son remotely

The Wedding (*John 2:1*)

Why did Jesus and His disciples go to Cana? = Wedding day ended the betrothal period

John 2:1-2 = They were invited to a wedding, Jesus celebrates with us

Wedding days were on Wednesday if bride was a virgin, Thursday if a widow.

On a wedding day, the bridegroom was escorted by his friends to the home of the bride.

Matthew 9:15 = Jesus, the bridegroom, was with His guests

The bride's friends went out to meet bridegroom and guide the way with lamps or torches.

Matthew 25:1-13 = Parable of bride's friends being always ready for bridegroom

Bride in wedding dress and veil joined group in parade through town to bridegroom's home.

Jeremiah 7:34 = Parade was celebration, singing, dancing, threw grain (fruitful)

Bride was given away with blessing from father or responsible relative.

Genesis 24:59-60 = Rebekah was sent to Isaac with blessing by family

The Wedding Feast (*John 2:2*)

Wedding feast included all relatives, neighbors and friends.

Genesis 29:22 = Laban gave a feast for Jacob with *all the people of the place*

Guests were seated by the groom in order of importance

Luke 14:7-11 = Jesus' parable of humbling yourself, don't take place of honor

Meals were as elaborate as family could afford, disgraceful not to have enough for all

Matthew 22:1-4 = King prepared wedding banquet for son – oxen and cattle

Wedding festival would last days, up to a week

Judges 14:10-12 = Samson's wedding festival lasted seven days

The Beverage (*John 2:3*)

What crisis arose at this wedding in Cana?

John 2:3 = They ran out of wine - a major embarrassment and disgrace

What beverages did the people of Israel have besides water?

Exodus 3:8 = Milk and honey - probably regular honey, not grape honey

Liked fresh grape juice, but only in season = No refrigerators or canning technology

Made grape honey by boiling grape juice into a syrup, used to sweeten and flavor

Water was added to pulp from pressed grapes and allowed to ferment

Matthew 27:48 = Made a very poor grade of wine or vinegar

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Making and Drinking Wine

- Most juice was allowed to ferment to make safe for storage and later drinking
 - Took full fresh goatskin, sewed up cuts, filled with juice, hung up
 - Some would sew skin with hair inside for distinctive flavor, done today in some cultures
- Fresh skins were used to allow expansion from fermenting process
 - Matthew 9:17 = Never used old skins, they would burst from fermentation
- Fermented wine was stored in *amphorae*, large pointed jugs
 - When ready to drink, wine poured into *kraters* (large bowls) and mixed with water
 - Typically 3 parts water to 1 part wine, up to 8:1, 10:1 or even 20:1
 - Mixed wine poured from *kraters* into *kylix* (cups) for drinking
- Only drunkards and barbarians drank wine straight or in 1:1 mix, called *strong drink*
 - Leviticus 10:8-9 = Priests not to drink wine or *strong drink* before entering temple

Jesus Is Asked to Help (*John 2:3-4*)

- Who became concerned about the problem and to whom did she turn?
 - John 2:3 = Jesus' mother felt bad for host and asked her son to help
 - Womens quarters were near wine storage; Mary would learn of shortage before Jesus
- Was Mary asking for a miracle?
 - Mark 3:20-21, 31-35 = No, she just looked to her responsible oldest son for help
- How did Jesus reply that pointed out how Mary's request could be misunderstood?
 - John 2:4 = Told Mary it wasn't in her place to tell Him what to do
- Was Jesus' reply to Mary harsh? = Only other time Mary is mentioned in John:
 - John 19:25-27 = Polite *woman* doesn't translate well, *Madam* or *lady* inadequate
- Was Jesus saying it wasn't time for Him to start doing miracles?
 - John 7:30-31 = Wasn't yet Jesus' time, even though He had done lots of miracles
- What is referred to as Jesus' hour?
 - John 12:23, 27 = Jesus glorified through crucifixion, resurrection and ascension
- Who was Jesus saying was in control of the times for Him to be glorified?
 - Matthew 24:36 = No one knows the time or plan but God the Father
- How would you paraphrase Jesus' response in today's language?
 - John 2:4 = "*You don't understand what's going on; I'll handle this my own way*"
 - Craig S. Keener: "*Once I begin doing miracles, I begin the road to the cross.*"

Jesus Helps (*John 2:5-6*)

- What does Mary say to show that although she doesn't understand Jesus, she trusts Him?
 - John 2:5 = She tells the servant to do whatever He tells them to do
- Did Jesus take the empty *amphorae* to make His miracle wine?
 - John 2:6 = No, He found 6 stone water jars; Clay pots could become unclean
- Was there any chance that these jars had wine residue to mix with Jesus' water?
 - Mark 7:1-4 = No, the jars were specifically used for ceremonial cleansing
- What are two points that are made by the number and sizes of the jars?
 - Mark 7:5 = Tradition defined how much water per person -> how many guests
 - John 6:8-13 = Jesus fills our needs beyond our expectations

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The Best for Last (*John 2:7-10*)

How elaborate were the procedures that Jesus performed to turn water into wine?

John 2:7-8 = Just had jars filled with water and had it served

How did Jesus' wine stand up in a "Folgers" blind taste test?

John 2:9-10 = The *best man* claimed this was the best wine, obviously real wine

What does this show us about God?

Luke 11:11-13 = God gives us the best gifts – salvation and the Holy Spirit

What gifts should we as Christians ask for?

1 Corinthians 12:31 = *Eagerly desire the greater gifts*

The Best Wine From Jesus (*John 2:10*)

What feast did Jesus leave for us to remember the best food and best wine?

Matthew 26:26-28 = His body and blood in the Lord's Supper

What promise did Jesus give us with this miraculous bread and wine?

John 6:51-56 = *Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life*

When was this life-giving water and blood given to us?

John 19:34 = Water and blood flowed from Jesus' pierced side after crucifixion

The First Miracle (*John 2:11*)

What was Moses' first miracle to save God's people from bondage?

Exodus 7:20 = Changed water in Nile River to blood

What was the purpose of Moses' miracles?

Exodus 7:17 = *By this you will know that I am the Lord*

What was the purpose of Jesus' miracles?

John 20:30-31 = *That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I been humbled after exalting myself?
(*Luke 14:7-14; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Matthew 18:1-4; 23:11-12; Romans 12:3; Ephesians 4:1-2; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5-6*)
2. How readily do I recognize someone in need and do something to help?
(*John 2:3; 13:1-17; Matthew 14:9-14; 25:40; Mark 8:1-3; Luke 10:29-37; 22:24-27; Colossians 3:23-24*)
3. Do I follow Jesus' instructions even when I don't understand His purpose?
(*John 2:5-8; Job 42:1-3; Ecclesiastes 11:5; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; Ephesians 5:17; Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 1:10-12*)
4. What are some of the best gifts I have received?
(*Luke 11:9-13; 8:10; Psalm 112:9; Ecclesiastes 3:13; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 2:4; 6:4-6; Revelation 22:17*)
5. Do I put to work the gifts that God gives me?
(*Proverbs 18:16; Luke 6:38; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31; 14:12; 2 Corinthians 8:10-12; 9:6-15; 1 Timothy 4:14*)