

John 2:1-11

Today's gospel reading is that lovely story of the wedding at Cana in Galilee.

It is the third epiphany of this Epiphany season: the **Magi** revealing Jesus as coming for all nations, the Saviour of the world; Jesus' **Baptism** revealing him as God's own beloved Son; and now as Jesus turns **water into wine**, he reveals God's new creation, and desire to recreate all things new.

In John's account it comes just after Jesus called his first disciples to follow him.

They had a lot to learn, and are just beginning to '*learn the ropes*', and yet witness such an amazing miracle. There are some **clear lessons** for the disciples here, illustrated in this miracle, **five first principles** of following Jesus, we might say:

1. Change is necessary.

Changing those disciples wasn't going to be as instant as turning water into wine, but wherever Jesus went, changes occurred, lives were changed. Later, his disciples would spread the Good News across the world, but to begin with Jesus wanted his followers to see that change, or growth, was a necessary part of their discipleship.

2. Change comes not from our wills alone, but from God.

Only Jesus can turn water into wine (without growing grapes, foot-treading...and time!)

Soon Jesus would be telling Nicodemus '*you must be born again, from above, of the Spirit*'. We cannot change ourselves, but God can, and will, change us, when we open ourselves to him.

3. God only requires the ordinary, everyday, that he created.

Ordinary well-water, fishermen who were ordinary men.

We don't have to improve ourselves, have great learning, or be perfect, before God can change us and use us! We come as we are, to begin with, ready to learn and to grow.

A group of simple, ordinary, very different disciples, who often got it wrong, were to be transformed into a group that would courageously turn the world upside down.

As a wise person once said, '*Jesus can do anything with ordinary people who give themselves to him*'. **We** can be transformed into people who experience the eternal life God offers to us, who are built together into a Church, a group of people whose lives reflect what God can do with ordinary people who trust him.

4. What is asked of us is to offer what we are and what we have, to Jesus.

To be willing to act on what we learn, to live before God with open hearts and open hands.

Mary knew where to turn for help. When the wine ran out, she simply told Jesus, '*They have no wine*', and told the servants '*Do whatever he tells you.*'

The **servants** obeyed, filling the jars to the brim with water, and the miracle took place, through their simple obedience.

We are not miracle workers, but God can do great things through our willing obedience.

5. God is the God of life in all its fullness. Jesus produced an abundance of wine, far more than was necessary, thought to be about 150 gallons!

The wedding feast is a picture of the abundant life Jesus offers to all, and points towards the heavenly banquet we will one day enjoy with God forever.

For those first disciples, following Jesus was not going to be dull, and it isn't for us either.

Five wonderful lessons here for the disciples, no wonder it says, '*Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him*'.

There would be harsher, harder lessons ahead, but they could wait. First things first, the disciples needed to understand these first principles. What joy and excitement they must have felt as they looked forward to being with Jesus in the months and years ahead!

And, of course, all these things apply to us today, just as much as to those first disciples, so many years ago. May we have their courage and honesty to daily follow Jesus, and to know the joy of being changed and used by him.