

John 2:1-11

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,

² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,

⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside

¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹ **This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. (NIV)**

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 4: 48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

John 20: 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But 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.

INTRO - First, I want to thank Pastor Kettner and you people of Christ Lutheran for allowing me to come and share God's Word with you on behalf of the Alaska Mission for Christ. You allowed me to do this once in 1996. I personally appreciate the privilege of bringing God's Word, and I am thankful when anyone is willing to partner with us in Alaska sharing the Good News with others that Jesus is the Savior of the World.

So talking about Jesus, let us look at today's Gospel Lesson. But first let me tell you of an experience I had yesterday. I was next door and my niece, Jessica was supposed to be doing math homework. But she was having a hard time. I mean, her uncle was in town, and it was a Saturday, not a school day. She was having trouble concentrating. So, I tried something to help get her attention. I told Jessica that if she would get her homework done, I would play a card game with her, spoons. Well, she had been working in the math for about an hour and only gotten one of the problems done. But, after catching her attention like that, she was finished in the next 10 minutes. But I understand that. Sometimes people just need a nudge to catch their attention (or a 2 x 4).

I. That is what we see in today's lesson, a nudge from our Savior.

A. This was quite a miracle.

1. Somewhat quietly Jesus helped out a newly married couple who had run out of wine.
2. He had 6 stone jars filled with about 150-180 gallons of water and when it was tasted it had become wine, good wine, the best wine. I'd like to taste a little.

B. So why did Jesus do this?

1. Look at the last verse, verse 11. **This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their FAITH in him.**
2. So why did Jesus do this?
3. Jesus used this miracle To catch the attention of His disciples so they would believe

C. But, that doesn't answer all the question. Why did Jesus need to catch their attention so they would believe?

1. John 20:30-31 tells the purpose God had for John writing this account of Jesus' life and ministry. **30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But 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.**
2. Jesus did these miracle, and God reveals them to the people of Jesus day, and to us through this Word of God, **SO WE WILL BELIEVE, AND BE SAVED FOR ETERNAL LIFE IN HEAVEN.**
3. You know John 3:16. **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

A. But, do you know John 3:18? **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

B. God wants to bring us to faith because by the Grace of God he saves sinners when they trust in Jesus as their savior from sin for eternal life.

C. God wants to bring us to faith because when people don't believe, they are rejecting His love in His Son, and they are then condemned to hell after this life.

D. And what God really wants, according to 1 Timothy 2:4 is for **all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

E. You see, Jesus did this miracle because he wanted to bring His disciples to faith so they would be saved, and God wants that for all people.

II. I had another experience yesterday at my brother's home. Your teacherage an exciting place. I was talking with Lori, who you know is a nurse. The conversation became about people who don't always follow their doctor's advice. Why do you think that happens? People go to their doctors for medical advice, but, then they often trust their own judgement more than the advice of their doctors.

God may save us through faith in Jesus, but. . . **People don't want to trust and follow God.** They want to trust their wisdom, their thoughts, their ideas, and follow their ways.

A. The account in chapter 2 of the Gospel of John after this story of turning water into wine is the story of Jesus turning over the tables in the temple.

1. You see, the religious leaders, and the people, wanted to trust in their good works, and their teaching, not Jesus.
2. They wanted to follow their will, and not God's.
3. If they continued down this path of rebellion, and rejecting God's mercy in His Son, and unbelief, and some did, then **those who do not believe are condemned.**

B. I am in town working on a doctoral paper in evangelism. Unfortunately, the reason we need to work on reaching people with the Gospel is that people have always had a natural inclination to put self first, and trust themselves and follow their desires, rather than God.

1. Right here in Southern Illinois you have the Federal prison in Marion because of people's inclination to reject God.
2. We all suffer under our own doubt of God, our own rebellion, and our sin actually causes more trouble for us here, in addition to being the reason we deserve to be condemned, if it were not for the Grace of God in sending Jesus.

C. We have the same in Alaska.

1. If you come to Bible Class you will see a DVD that will tell you that while Alaska is the largest state, 25% the size of the lower 48, but we only have about 650,000 people, many very spread out
2. Among these people there are many different cultures, including many types of Alaskan natives.
3. Somehow The great distances and the many cultures lead to an area where there are fewer practicing Christians than anywhere else in the U.S. The last census said 80% of Alaskans are not practicing Christians, especially in the outlying areas.
4. It is not surprising then that Alaska leads the nation in per capita alcohol use and abuse, and leads the country in suicide, and leads the country in abuse in family situations.
5. Alaska is an area that needs the grace and love of God because if people continue down this path of rebellion, and rejecting God's mercy in His Son, and unbelief, then **those who do not believe are condemned.**

III. Now, I've been asked to come and share a mission message and to use our assigned readings. Today's Gospel is not so much a mission text, it is more an Epiphany text, a reading that reveals Jesus as the Son of God so people believe.

A. But there is an important clue here I want you to look at with me again Look at verse 11, **This, the FIRST of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.**

1. Which sign was this? It was Jesus' FIRST sign. In fact, John 20 remember says, **Jesus did MANY OTHER signs that are not written in this book**
2. There is a way that this is a missionary text, because Jesus left heaven to come to earth and to reveal the love and righteousness of God to a sinful world.
3. But, he didn't just do one miracle. He did them again and again and again to reach out to sinners who resist God's love, so they could not be unbelieving but believe, not be condemned but be saved.
4. Jesus did not just turn water into wine, He died to pay the price for the sins of a rebellious world, and He rose overcoming sin, and death, and hell.
5. Everything necessary for salvation, God has done in Jesus.

B. God wants us to reach out.

1. In John 20 we are told in verses 21-23 that on Easter night Jesus told His disciples, **21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I AM SENDING YOU." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."**
2. Jesus sends us so people know Him, so people are forgiven, so people are saved, not condemned.

C. First, let me commend you for all the work you do to share Jesus.

1. I know you send in mission money to the Southern Illinois District, and to Synod, and reach out in other ways. God wants us to bring the good news of Jesus where we are.

2. In Alaska, we also support District and Synod missions, but we have a Circuit Mission Society with 2 full time missionaries and 2 others helping in the work of reaching out with the good news of Jesus.

A. Last year we had over 100 Vacation Bible Schools and servant Events, reaching almost 5000 people.

B. We also provide worship in many of the communities not able to support a full time church worker.

C. 3 of these churches have become recognized congregations of the LCMS in the last 10 years.

D. We've even been reaching into Russia and Honduras through people with contacts there.

3. I thank you for being willing to welcome me to bring God's Word to you, and for being willing to help us in letting God use us to share Jesus with people who really need Him.

4. We don't want to just go once to those in need. They might resist. We want to go again and again, and hope that God brings them to faith, and they are saved.

CONCLUSION - One of the places we go is a native village named Tanacross, off the Alaska Highway. One year a VBS team returned there, after having been there the year before. As they arrived, a lady who had been there the previous year saw a girl she remembered, and asked her, 'Do you remember me?' The girls looked but the lady could see she did not recognize her. But the girl said, 'No, I don't remember you, but I do remember (and she made the motions) that Jesus died on the cross for me.' The cross, by the way, is God's greatest glory.

May God use the work of all of us as his people so that, as Jesus said in verse 11 **He thus revealed his glory, and his children put their FAITH in him.**