

The Gospel of **JOHN** Discussion Guide

October 8-9, 2022

Ice Breaker Questions

- In today's text, Jesus begins to demonstrate who he really is by what he does.
 - What is something you remember someone doing for you or someone else that immediately impressed you?

Understand Their Story

In the first chapter of John, we have rising anticipation as people excitedly gather around Jesus to follow him, but we haven't seen Jesus himself do or say much yet. In John 2:1-11, we see Jesus perform his first miracle, or "sign".

1. Look over the previous chapter for a moment. What was the topic of the last conversation of Chapter 1, in verses 47-51? What does Jesus promise in that conversation?
The topic of the conversation was about belief, particularly what Jesus does to make Nathanael believe. Jesus promises that Nathanael will witness "greater things" than Jesus seeing him under the fig tree.
2. Look back to our story in John 2:1-11.
 - a. What is the problem as the story opens?
The wine for the wedding has run out.
 - b. What would be the social cost of this problem going unsolved?
It would be a great shame and embarrassment for the wedding couple especially in an honour-shame culture like first-century Palestine.
3. Look at the solution to that problem.
 - a. What gets said about the wine Jesus provides? How is Jesus's solution different from just having more wine?
*The wine is twice called *good* wine. Jesus could have solved their problem by providing more wine, but he chose to make *excellent* wine. People in your group may also bring up the vast quantity of wine (equivalent to about 600-900 typical modern bottles of wine!).*
 - b. Why does John say that Jesus did this?
To manifest his glory so that the disciples would believe. Note that Jesus is already beginning to fulfill his promise to Nathanael!
 - c. Do we know what glory means?
Depending on your group this could be a quick question or a longer one. If they have trouble with the word feel free to have someone look up the word and read a few definitions and discuss as a group which one fits best. At the very least they should have an idea that glory in this story means something like impressive greatness.
 - d. Who saw what happened and didn't believe?
*The servants. While not very visible in this passage, the theme of some people seeing *but not believing* gets developed later in John's Gospel.*

4. John calls "turning water into wine" a sign rather than a miracle. Do you expect different things from a sign than from a miracle?
- Don't feel the need to push for a particular answer and feel free to come back to this question after the Connect to His Story section. The general idea is to understand that a sign points to something or reveals some information about something.

Connect to His Story

In this story, we are introduced to this wine as somehow being a sign of glory.

5. What is the significance of wine in Old Testament prophecies? What does wine seem to symbolize?

Read these passages and

- ❖ Isaiah 24:6-8
- ❖ Isaiah 25:6-9
- ❖ Joel 3:17-18

Wine represents joy, celebration, and abundant blessings from God.

6. Look back to John 2:11, where Jesus manifests his glory and the disciples believe. What is the connection between the glory they see and them coming to believe? Why does this kind of glory lead to belief?

Seeing something so incredible, wonderful, and delightful not only impresses us, but draws us in by its goodness.

7. Much later in his gospel, John explicitly tells us why he wrote about these signs. And Peter uses similar language in some of his writing. Read these two passages out loud, back to back, and listen for shared words or similar ideas.

- ❖ John 20:28-31
- ❖ 1 Peter 1:8-9, focusing on verse 8 & 9

- a. What shared words or similar ideas did you hear?

Both passages refer to those who have not seen Jesus but believe in him anyways. Jesus calls these people "blessed". Peter says these people "rejoice with joy that is inexpressible" and that they "love him". These people rejoice even though they are grieved by trials.

Apply to Our Story

John 2:1-11, like last week's passage, does not necessarily call readers to do anything. Instead, John gives us a picture of the joy that Jesus generously brings. It is a joy that draws us to him and is made ours through belief in him.

1. What caused you to believe in Jesus?
2. What gives you joy in Jesus? How could you describe that reason for joy to someone who doesn't know Jesus?
 - a. God's forgiveness: When I feel guilty I don't have to bury that feeling.
 - b. God's provision: I know that God will provide for me whatever I need.
 - c. God's presence: Even in times of being alone, I know that God is with me, he sees me and hears me.
 - d. God's providence: God is always working things for my good and I can trust in his purposes.

Prayer

- *Pray in Adoration: Jesus is the glorious only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth, the one who brings us abundant joy!*
 - *Pray in Confession for the times when we've let Jesus become mundane to us.*
 - *Pray in Supplication for renewed sight of Christ's goodness.*
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God's work and our Work

How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 2:1-11

The Theology of Work commentary on this text notes:

"Jesus' "first sign" (John 2:11), changing water into wine at a wedding in Cana, lays the foundation for understanding the subsequent signs. This is no parlor trick done to attract attention to himself. He does it reluctantly, and the miracle is hidden even from the master of the banquet. Jesus does it *only* in the face of pressing human need and to honor his mother's request. (Running out of wine at the wedding would have brought great shame on the bride, the groom, and their families, and that shame would have lingered long in the village culture of Cana.) Far from being an unmoved mover (as some Greeks regarded God), Jesus shows himself to be the loving, responsive Son of the loving, eternal Father and the beloved human mother."¹

- This text reveals again to us that we worship a God who cares deeply for our lives. Whether it is our family, our social events, our friendships, our workplaces or our quiet spaces in prayer, God is attentive to our needs.
- How might our understanding of Jesus as revealed in this story, inform and guide us in our own lives (especially our workplaces)?

This story reveals Jesus as having power over all creation. He has the ability to supernaturally manipulate material substance to meet the needs of people, yet in the midst of this "working" he seeks no glory for himself. How often do we approach our work with motivations distorted by our pride and desire to "make a name for ourselves" or to be recognized. It is important for us to recognize that God desires to provide for our needs and that he calls us as workers in this world to work in meeting the needs of others, yet in our work we need to take on the same mind as Christ as shown to us in this story.

¹ <https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/john/water-into-wine-wedding-cana-john-21-11>