

## **“Extraordinary! It’s New Wine!”**

**Date:** Feb. 3, 2018

**Place:** Lakewood UMC, Barista Parlor

**Occasion:** Coffee House

**Text:** John 2:1-11

**Theme:** New Life; Abundant Life, Extraordinary Life

Before we get too serious, have you ever noticed the signs in front of churches that have a message or a saying on them? Sometimes they give the sermon title, or maybe it’s a great quote. They’re meant to attract our attention, but sometimes those signs create problems.

Like at this one church. They put the title of that week’s sermon right above the pastor’s name. The sermon title was, “Who Killed Jesus?” And right below it they posted the pastor’s name, “Rev. Bob Lewis.” So it read, “Who Killed Jesus? – Pastor Bob.” Not good!

At another church they posted this message: “Jesus saves.” And then, directly across the street was a Walmart Store. And their sign read: “Walmart Saves You More.” Kind of funny, huh?

In the book of John, the gospel writer tells the Gospel message using the signs that Jesus used. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, the gospel writers tell the life of Jesus using stories and the stories Jesus told, called parables. But John presents Jesus’ life using signs.

The thing about signs is that they point beyond themselves. It’s not the sign that’s important, but what it points to. For example, when I’m driving along the road and I see a sign that says, “Curve Ahead” and it’s got a curvy little line painted on it, what’s important is not the squiggly line on the sign, but the real curve in the road ahead. I better pay attention.

In John’s gospel, the purpose of signs is to reveal Jesus’ glory. They’re not proof that Jesus is the son of God, but they are meant to provoke us to faith. And so is this event in the life of Jesus, where we find

him at a wedding. Weddings are fun times, unless you run out of refreshments and the guests get restless. So, in this his first miracle, Jesus turns water into wine, and everyone is happy and delighted and surprised.

But the whole point of this living parable is that Jesus offers us himself, represented by the wine. In Him life is abundant, awesome, even extraordinary. In fact, life in Christ is better than the best.

John's point in telling this sign-story is not to convince us that Jesus is able to do neat tricks with water. But to tell us that life is better when we have a personal relationship with the Master.

The miracle takes place on the third day, an unmistakable reference to the resurrection and glory of the risen Christ. It takes place during a village wedding feast, an image which reminds us of the great banquet feast in Heaven, the bridal supper described in Revelation 19: 7- 9.

And the water jugs placed outside of Jewish homes were used for the ritual of purification. They had become empty. And the symbolism is the old Jewish rituals had become empty; they had lost their life. And the water jugs are now filled with the wine of the gospel, the good news of Jesus.

And did you notice how much wine he produced? 120 gallons, which is way more than they needed – symbolic of the extravagant love of God. Wine is a symbol of life. And the meaning now becomes clear: in Christ there is new life, abundant life, extraordinary life.

The point is, symbolized by new wine and in fact the best wine, Jesus gives us himself and in doing so he makes life extraordinary.

So let me ask you – for how many of us have the water-pots gone dry, our religion just doesn't give us life anymore? It happens, good religion can become stale. You see, the Jewish people weren't bad people. But their religion wasn't satisfying any more. It wasn't meeting their needs.

It was plain, it was ordinary, it was like drinking water. And what the people wanted was the best wine, which Jesus offers in himself. And even though we may have Jesus in our life, our religion can be no more than an empty water jug. How? - if it's not bringing us life, if it keeps us in bondage, if it's nothing more than rituals that don't mean anything to us.

So, how's it going with your religion? Is it still bringing you new life, or has it become a little stale? Let me tell another story. One Sunday a pastor asked the children during the children's sermon if they would like to hold a miracle in their hands. All the hands went up.

So the pastor gave to each of them an acorn, telling them God had put an oak tree inside each of those acorns. Once that acorn was planted in the ground, with the warmth of the sun and the nourishment of the rain, that acorn would grow to be a great oak tree, producing hundreds more acorns, all out of that acorn in their hand. It was indeed a miracle.

After the service a mother approached the pastor with her seven year old son. The mother told the boy to tell the pastor what happened. With fear and sadness in his eyes, the boy looked up at the pastor and with great seriousness in his voice said, "Pastor, I lost my miracle."

Sadly, that has happened to many people today. They have lost their miracle, the miracle of a living relationship with Jesus Christ. We've heard the words before; we've been going to church for years; and we act like we know all about Jesus. But somehow we've lost our miracle.

The water pots of our faith are empty, and we long for a miracle. We long for the bland water to be turned into extraordinary wine. Am I right?

Well, hear the good news. Jesus Christ is the new wine. And he longs to come into our life, again and again, to renew us with Himself.

Jesus promises to do a miracle, to take the ordinary and make it extraordinary. Life in Christ is abundant; it's better than we can imagine.

The host of that wedding feast long ago was surprised with how good the wine tasted. And that's how it is with Jesus. Jesus calls forth joy and delight. He overthrows our expectations and gives us far better than we could have anticipated. When we invite Christ into our life again, God sends gifts that keep getting better and better.

Jesus takes the broken pieces of our lives and He makes us whole again. He takes the shattered fragments of our past and He builds a new life for us, even more glorious than we could imagine. He heals the hurts and the pain; he binds up the wounds; and he does for us what all the kings horses and all the kings men couldn't do.

Jesus puts us Humpty-Dumpties back together again. Because he is King of kings and Lord of lords. The miracle of Cana of Galilee points to the power of God to transform the water of life into the wine of His love.

Won't you let God recreate you, change you, transform you? God wants to give you the very best, all that life holds for you. It's extraordinary; its new wine; its life in Christ. Amen? Amen! Let us pray:

O holy God, we celebrate your willingness to be with us, among us and in us. Put a new spirit within each of us, the spirit of Jesus. And let us experience the quickening of your life within us. Transform me, and each one here that we may become, ever more fully, a dwelling place for your love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.