

Sterling Sermon Guide
The Signs of Jesus: Water into Wine
Moses Falco, September 9, 2018

The *Signs* of Jesus



How to use this guide

- The main purpose of this guide is to encourage groups and individuals to dig deeper into the topic of a sermon. This guide summarizes the sermon and provides discussion questions and suggestions of how to continue the conversation in order to apply the topic to real life.
- Listen to the sermon online (sterlingmennonite.ca) if you were not in church that Sunday or if you want to hear it again. If this sermon is not on the website, please contact our office.
- Re-read the scripture text and recommended reading.
- Select a leader in your group to guide your conversation and to lead you through this study.
- Use what is helpful for your group, but do not be bound by this guide. Let the Spirit lead you. You may be surprised where you end up.

The Signs of Jesus: Water into Wine
Part 1 of a 6-part series

Scripture Text: John 2:1-11

Recommended Reading: John 1:43 - 2:12

Prepare Your Heart: John 20:30-31

Sermon Nugget: The sign of Jesus turning water into wine is the first miracle of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John. What we quickly find out about Jesus' miracles are that there is always something more/deeper going on. In this story, we see the relational dynamics of Jesus, with his family and his disciples, and how they begin to believe that He is something more than just a great person. They learn that there is something special about Jesus, that He cares about relationships, and that He has power over the elements.

Introduction to the Signs in John

Out of the four gospels, John stands out as unique. It doesn't follow the same structure as the others and reads differently than Matthew, Mark or Luke. It was written between 80-90 AD, but we're unsure if the author was the apostle John, John the elder, or if this was a written collection of the Johannine community.

In this gospel, we find 8 signs (wonders or miracles) that Jesus performed. These signs are meant to tell us something about Christ. They point to His divinity and character, and teach us something about what He can still do today. John wants us to know that Jesus and God the Father are one. They have always been. When we encounter Jesus, we encounter God.

In John 20:30-31, John explains why these signs are recorded. They are only a selection of the signs Jesus performed in order that we might believe in Him as the Messiah, the Son of God. It's through this belief that we have eternal life (John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9).

Discussion Questions

- 1) Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Why? Why not?
- 2) Do you think that proof would help you believe? If so, what would that proof look like?

Signs as Witness

If the signs of Jesus are proof of His divinity, then it should follow that all people would believe in Him. What about the people who were there - they should also believe in Him, right? But this isn't the case. We read later that even though people saw the signs for themselves, they still didn't believe that Jesus and the Father are one (John 12:37).

That's because these signs, as amazing as they are, are not proof, but **witness**. What we are actually reading about are the stories of the people who were there and their reasons for why they chose to believe in Jesus as God. The decision is still up to each of us whether or not we will take these stories as accurate and believe that these signs really point to Jesus' divinity.

Discussion Questions

- 3) Are there times in your life when you have experienced God in a way you would describe as a wonder or miracle? If so, how do you feel about sharing that experience with others?

Take some time to read through the story of the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11).

1) **There's a Wedding** (John 2:1-2)

- We don't know who got married, but Jesus, His family, and the disciples were invited.
- We also don't know much about the wedding, but we can speculate that it was large and that perhaps it was someone close to the family since Mary hears about the wine running out. This wouldn't be something simply shared with all the guests.

2) **There's a Problem** (John 2:3)

- The wine runs out, and this is not good news for the wedding party. It's an embarrassment.
- Mary goes to her son to help them with the problem. She believes Jesus should intervene. Her sympathy for the wedding party and her confidence in Jesus bring her to Him.

Discussion Questions

- 4) There's something to be said about a kind of faith whose first response is to go to Jesus. Often we put excuses in the way or simply think we can handle things on our own. Do we have the confidence in Jesus to come to Him first, to ask Him to act? Where else do we turn?

3) **Jesus Obliges** (John 2:4-5)

- At first, Jesus tells His mother that His time hasn't yet come. Perhaps He knew that when people started to see His signs, He would have to begin His public ministry which would eventually lead Him to the cross. Timing seemed to be important.
- Despite Jesus' comment, Mary sets things into motion. When Jesus calls Mary "woman," it is an endearing term, not disrespectful. Perhaps He sees how important this is to her.

4) **Jesus Performs** (John 2:6-10)

- Jesus takes ordinary water jugs (each 20-30 litres) and makes the best wine out of water.
- How did Jesus do it? We don't know and we aren't given an answer. That's the point. It's not an illusion or magic. But Jesus could do this because He is divine.

5) **The Disciples Believe** (John 2:11)

- The result of this sign is the same result that John hoped for in John 20. The disciples believe because they saw Him do this wonder.
- The sign points to Jesus and asks us to also believe He is the Messiah.

Discussion Questions

- 5) What are your reflections about the story? What sticks out? What do you appreciate? What do you have questions about? How do you interpret this sign?

The Significance of Turning Water into Wine

In the first chapter of John, we read about the Word that becomes flesh. This Word, who is Jesus, was one with God from the beginning and through Him everything was made in creation. The sign of Jesus turning water into wine links Him to the creation power of God. Jesus is able to make something out of nothing. Just like God, He is in control of the created order.

Discussion Questions

- 6) What might it mean for us to realize that Jesus, as God, has the power to create and recreate? Do we see God work this way today?

Jesus at Work Today

Because of the witness of the disciples and what they saw Jesus do, we learn something about the character of Jesus for us today. Here are a few take-aways:

- 1) **Jesus abides in real life.** He shows up in everyday situations and is present in our need.
- 2) **Jesus listens.** Our concerns might be trivial, but we know we can always approach Jesus.
- 3) **Jesus speaks things into creation.** He can make something out of nothing because He is in control of everything.

Discussion Questions

- 7) How do these characteristics of Jesus resonate with you? Have you experienced God in this way in your life? What other characteristics might you add from this story?

- 4) **Jesus can do more than we can ever hope or imagine, often in ways we never expect.**

Resources for Further Study (available for loan from Sterling)

John by Gerard Sloyan (Interpretation Commentary, 1988).

John by Willard M. Swartley (Believers Church Bible Commentary, 2013).