

John 2:1-11 | 2025.01.19

Turning water into wine is quite a miracle. This moment introduces what Jesus is all about, his ministry, his purpose is to transform everything for the better.

These jars of water were set aside for the purification ritual before eating. According to Jewish law this cleansing ritual was essential. When Jesus changed the water in the consecrated jugs into wine, he challenged the conventional wisdom about the intension of the law in the most profound way. Jesus demonstrated that in God's Kingdom the value of a person is more important than the value of following a ritual, even one as good as washing up before a meal.

All laws, including good religious laws, can wound people when following the law becomes more important than why the law exists. Setting aside water for guests to wash follows God's law of purity and is also considerate and good hospitality. To run out of wine at a wedding is more than we might think.

This would result in being shamed and excluded from the community for lack of hospitality. Taking that water and turning it into wine prevented the couple and their families from harm.

Jesus' actions shows that the people involved are more important than defending the way something has always been done. The purification ritual is a good thing to do, unless there is something more compassionate and generous to be done.

This is the beginning of God's new order, an order not exclusively based on fulfilling the laws at all costs, rather a return to the purpose of them. The laws were given as guidelines for being in a right relationship with God and with each other.

And with any change some people embraced it, and some fought against it. Their perception of what is most important – a policy or loving the people it was designed for became clear. For Jesus, it was always to bring in reconciliation and love.

All of Jesus' miracles, or signs as John calls them, were done in real time for real people in real situations. These were never to impress; they were always to transform a situation or a person for the better. And

Jesus always redeems with generosity and abundance, weather its wine, food, healing or loving someone.

Jesus uses his power as the Son of God to bring good to others. His miracles are not for his needs, or to be known or to get the credit. Jesus' actions are always for the good of the other person or for the good of an entire community. This is how Jesus reveals God's glory, its expressed in everyday moments as he encounters people in need. Whatever is needed to transform life for the people, Jesus does it.

As Jesus' followers, we too can transform life for someone by noticing them and being compassionate, generous and kind. As Carol shared last Sunday - it's all about the practice of love. And loving like anything we want to be good at, takes practice. We start where we are and step by baby step, we grow into being better disciples of Jesus. We know we can do this because we have God's help with us always.

Turning water into wine was amazing. Doing it to prevent shame from falling on someone was incredibly considerate. And challenging the system was bold. Jesus did what was compassionate knowing the risks involved in doing so. When he turned the water into wine, Jesus

knew it would be that start of his ministry to redeem the world. And he knew it was going to be a challenging and often painful, but worth it.

When we live like Jesus – doing acts of practical compassion and responding to the needs of the people right in front of us.... we too can make a situation better and bring redemption, even if just for a moment.

Being compassionate and sharing God's love takes practice, and it will change us. Doing our part to continue Jesus' mission to transform this world is well worth it, so be bold and take the risks needed to love as Jesus loved.

Amen.