

Water Turned to Wine

At a wedding in Cana, Jesus shows that the world's joy runs out, but His never does

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

JOHN 15:11

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	In His first miracle, Jesus turned water into the best wine when a wedding's supply ran out. In Scripture, wine is often a picture of joy. The world's joy always runs dry, but Jesus gives joy in full measure, and it comes as we believe His Word.
SCRIPTURE	John 2:1-11 · Psalm 104:15 · Psalm 4:7 · Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 · John 15:11 · 1 Peter 1:8 · Romans 15:13
LENGTH	About 20 minutes
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles; a clear pitcher of water and a glass; optional: a picture of large stone water jars

Start here: a party in trouble

Read John 2:1-11. In Jesus' day, a wedding celebration could last a whole week, and the groom's family was expected to provide food and drink for everyone. Running out of wine wasn't just inconvenient. It was embarrassing, the kind of thing people would talk about for years.

Mary told Jesus, "They have no wine" (v. 3). Then she told the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it" (v. 5). That's still great advice.

1 Wine, a picture of joy

In the Old Testament, wine often stood for joy and celebration. God gives "wine that makes glad the heart of man" (Psalm 104:15). David wrote, "You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increased" (Psalm 4:7). David knew a joy from God that was even better than a great harvest.

FOR THE LEADER

This talk is about joy, not about drinking. Keep the focus on Jesus. If students ask, point out that Scripture warns, "Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18), and that underage drinking is against the law. Notice that Paul contrasts wine with the Spirit: the Spirit gives the real joy people look for in a bottle.

2 The supply fails

The world's joy always runs out. King Solomon tried everything: "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure" (Ecclesiastes 2:10). His conclusion? "All was vanity and grasping for the wind" (2:11).

Ask students: "What do people try to fill themselves with?" New stuff, likes and followers, relationships, entertainment, achievements. Each gives a little joy, and then it's gone. Like the wedding, life eventually runs dry.

3 Jesus provides it

Jesus didn't lecture the hosts or walk away. He provided. He said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). Jesus doesn't just give us joy; He gives us His joy, the joy He shares with the Father.

4 In full measure

"Now there were set there six waterpots of stone... containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece... And they filled them up to the brim" (John 2:6-7). That's between 120 and 180 gallons, far more than the party needed! And it wasn't cheap wine. The master of the feast said, "You have kept the good wine until now!" (v. 10).

Peter describes the joy of believers who love Jesus without seeing Him: "you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8). Jesus' joy is full, overflowing, and the best is yet to come.

DID YOU NOTICE?

Those stone jars were used "according to the manner of purification of the Jews" (v. 6), for religious washing rituals. Jesus took the containers of empty religious routine and filled them with joy. He didn't come to give us more rules to keep, but new life to enjoy.

5 Water, a picture of the Word

The Bible often uses water as a picture of what God gives through His Word. Christ cleanses His church "with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26). And the invitation still stands: "Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

The servants had to obey Jesus' word and fill the jars with plain water. When they did, Jesus turned it into joy. When we take in God's Word and obey it, Jesus does the same in us.

6 Believed, it brings joy

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." **ROMANS 15:13**

Joy comes "in believing." John says this first sign "manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him" (John 2:11). The miracle wasn't just about saving a party. It was about showing who Jesus is, so that we would trust Him.

TALK IT OVER

1. Why was running out of wine such a big deal at a wedding?
2. What are some things people try to find joy in? Why do they run out?
3. What does it tell you about Jesus that He made so much wine, and the best wine?
4. What did the servants have to do before the miracle happened? What does that teach us?
5. According to Romans 15:13, how do we receive God's joy?

TAKE IT HOME

This week, notice when your "joy supply" runs low. Instead of reaching for your phone or something else, open God's Word and read John 15:1-11. Pray Romans 15:13 each morning, and do one thing Jesus says, just as the servants did.

The world runs dry. Jesus fills you to the brim.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

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