

St. Matthew A.M.E. Church  
Bible Study  
Monday, October 13, 2008

John 2:1-11

Over the last few weeks we have been studying about “making disciples.” And I have said that next to Calvary the most important thing that Jesus did was make disciples. This is important because disciples would be responsible to carry out His work in the world in His absence. So Jesus went about making disciples.

In our studies over the last few weeks we have said that Disciples of Christ are those who “love and obey God, live with joy, bear fruit and glorify God.” The last two weeks we have studied how we love and obey God. Tonight we want to study how we live with joy. In this text, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of John’s gospel Jesus shows us how disciples live with joy. Look closely at this text. It says that “on the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus mother was there, and Jesus and His disciples had also been invited to the wedding. This setting is important because they tell us a lot about the beginning of Jesus ministry. The wedding Jesus attended was the last day of an eventful seven days for Jesus. On the first day John the Baptist confronted the Jewish delegation from Jerusalem. (John 1:19-28) On the second day John identifies Jesus for the first time as the Lamb of God. (John 1:29-36) The third day Andrew and an unnamed disciple (probably John) follow Jesus. (John 1:37-39) On the fourth day Andrew brings his brother Simon (John 1:40-42). The fifth day Jesus called Nathanael (John 1:47-49). The sixth day was spent traveling. On the seventh day Jesus and His disciples arrived in Cana for the wedding. More importantly this is also the day that Jesus officially begins His public ministry. This is also the beginning of what some biblical scholars call “the book of Christ signs.” This refers to seven signs or miracles that Jesus performed in John 2-11. After each of these faith resulted. These seven signs or miracles are:

1. Turning water into wine (John 2:1-11)
2. Healing of the Nobleman’s son (John 4:46-54)
3. Sick man at pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9)
4. Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:6-13)
5. Walking on the water (John 6:19-21)
6. Man born blind (John 9:1-7)
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus gave these signs to establish a certain portion of knowledge and training in the disciples minds. Each sign or miracle had a specific meaning or lesson to be taught.

The first miracle or sign was turning water into wine and was intended to teach a specific lesson. That lesson is not only that the Disciples of Christ are to live with joy but that that joy comes from Christ. This joy is supernatural and is an outward sign. Psalm 32:11 says “rejoice in the Lord and be glad.....” Jesus said, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (John 15:11) According to these verses the life of the Christian is to be characterized by joy, not by the superficial, raucous joy of which the world is capable, but by the divine and desirable joy

characterized by the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. This text tells us how we can learn that joy.

First, note that the wedding occurred on a Wednesday. Under Jewish law the normal day for a wedding was Wednesday, the day prescribed for the wedding of a virgin. There are a number of possible reasons for why Jesus was invited to the wedding. It may have been through Nathanael, for Cana of Galilee was his hometown (John 21:2) or it may have been because of His mother Mary who seems to have a prominent place at the feast. However we was invited it seems that Jesus was welcome.

Second, note that the wine ran out. This may not be a big deal to us today, when we can run out to the corner or package store and come right back. But in those days it was a serious problem. It caused great embarrassment to the host. This embarrassment is even greater when we see what the Bible has to say about wine. Because of our secular thinking and distorted view of what is righteous many of us view wine negatively. But in the Bible wine is a symbol of joy. Jewish rabbis said, “without wine there is no joy.” So to run out of wine would be like saying that neither the groom nor bride had joy. In Psalm 104:15 it praises God for giving, “wine that gladdens the heart of man.” In Isaiah 55:1 we are told to “come buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” At every Jewish feast the drink that is served in wine. The problem is not wine; it is our abuse of wine that is sinful.

Third, there is spiritual meaning to the wine running out. That meaning is that apart from Jesus the joy of which men are capable is limited and that good times are nothing more than good times that will run out. Mary came to Jesus and said, “they have no wine.” She wanted Jesus to do something. Jesus said to her, “woman, what does that have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” (John 2:4) Jesus words to His mother sound harsh but they are not. “Woman” was a title of respect much like our word “lady.” He uses the same words when He addresses His mother from the cross. The point of Jesus reply was that He was not ready to do anything openly because the “hour” of His crucifixion was still years away.

Fourth, notice what Mary does. She said to the servants, “whatever He tells you to do, do it. (John 2:5) Mary knew her son well. She had seen the difference in Him from the time He left Nazareth. She knew that He now knew who He was and that He had a special calling from God on His life. Mary was ready for Him to publicly declare who He was and she knew He was going to do something.

Fifth, notice what Jesus does. There were six water pots used for Jewish purification sitting there. Jesus told them to fill them up with water which they did. Then they took some to the headwaiter. When he had tasted it he went to the bridegroom and said to him, “every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poor wine, but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus had not only turned the water into wine but it was better than the wine they had served before.

Finally, notice the quantity or abundance of wine that Jesus produced. There were six stone water jars, each containing two or three firkins apiece. This is the equivalent of nine or ten gallons. Total Jesus must have produced between a hundred eight and a hundred eighty gallons of the very best wine. There is no way that crowd could have drank a hundred eight or a hundred eighty gallons of wine. Jesus intentionally produced an over abundance of wine. Jesus always produces more than enough. When He fed the five thousand with the boy's bag lunch, He didn't provide enough just for the 5,000 He provided more. The lesson is that when we come to Christ we will never run out of joy. Jesus says, "He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35)

This is the joy that Jesus gives and provides us. It is a joy that will never run out. If we find ourselves empty and joy less is because we left Him not that He left us. The good news is that we can return to Christ and He will welcome us back.