

PM John 2:1-12 Signs of the Messiah

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- [0 : 00] So if we can turn in the Old Testament to the prophet Isaiah. And we're going to be reading from chapter 5.
- ! Now I'm not sure if you've got a pew Bible that corresponds to the page numbers in this Bible, but if you have, it would be page 724.
- Anyway, it's Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah, chapter 5. And just so that you are aware as I read this, God in the Old Testament likened and spoke of the vineyard in Israel as Israel itself.
- In other words, he spoke of it as a metaphor for his people at that time, Israel. And this is an interesting part because in the Bible the heading is, The Vineyard of the Lord Destroyed.
- Although it begins sounding quite positive, and it really is a picture of Israel who, for centuries, always disappointed the Lord and was unfaithful.
- [1 : 29] As our minister Colin Dow keeps saying, imperfect church, perfect saviour. And it's the same in the Bible as well, in both Testaments.
- So here we go. Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
- He dug it, cleared it of stones, planted it with choice vines. He built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out a wine vat in it.
- And he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And then there's more direct speech.
- And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between me, says God, and my vineyard, Israel.
- [2 : 34] What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?
- And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge and it shall be devoured. I will break down its wall and it shall be trampled down.
- I will make it a waste. It shall not be pruned or hoed and briars and thorns shall grow up. I will also command the clouds that they rain, no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord, there it is explicitly.
- For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel. And the men of Judah are his pleasant planting.
- And he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed, what has changed. For righteousness, but behold, an outcry.
- [3 : 35] Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field. This is the wealthy. And there is no more room. And you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.
- The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing, Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses without inhabitant. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath.

And a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah. We'll leave it there and we'll now also read from John's Gospel again.

This time in chapter 2. And we will read verses 1 to 12. John's Gospel, chapter 2, reading verses 1 to 12.

On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. And the mother of Jesus was there. However, Jesus also was invited to the wedding.

[4 : 50] That means also as well as the mother. With his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, They have no wine.

And Jesus said to her, Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you.

Now, there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, Fill the jars with water, and they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, Now draw some out, and take it to the master of the feast.

So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water, now become wine, and did not know where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew, the master of the feast called the bridegroom, and said to him, Everyone serves the good wine first, And when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine, but you have kept the good wine until now.

[6 : 08] This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

After this, he went down to Capernaum, with his mother, and his brothers, and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

Amen. May the Lord add his own blessing to the reading of his word. Before we turn to that passage, we'll go then to John chapter 2.

John chapter 2. And we're going to be looking at this passage of Scripture.

I want you to be aware that John, among the Gospel writers, is quite a proficient literary, writer.

[7 : 20] He uses illusion, and irony, and double meaning, symbol, metaphor, as well as direct speech.

And I want you to watch out for these things, as we go through this passage. And the other interesting thing I want you to notice is, clearly, in this passage, we've got new wine, contrasted with the old.

We'll see that as we go through the passage. And of course, as well, in chapter 2, you've got the new temple.

when Jesus goes into the temple, when Jesus goes into the temple, upsets everything, and says, destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days. And they didn't understand that he was talking about his own fate, his own destiny, as the new temple.

And also, you've got, in chapter 3, the new birth, that Nicodemus, seems to be talking, in natural terms, but it's the new birth, that Jesus is talking in.

[8 : 39] And in chapter 4, of John's gospel, you find Jesus talking to, the Samaritan lady, and she's talking about the old temple, that Jacob, the old well, and all that.

And Jesus says, the day is coming, when you will neither worship, at that place, or in Jerusalem, for God seeks such, to worship him in spirit, and in truth. The new age, of the coming of Jesus.

But, we're dealing here, this evening, with this, sign. By the way, that's the word, that John uses, for the word, miracle, that is used, in the other gospels.

John prefers, this word, Simeon, sign. And the reason, he prefers it, is that, these signs, manifest, something, of the being, and the identity, of Jesus Christ.

Not, that everyone, sees them, and not, that they should be, wanting a sign, as Jesus said, a wicked generation, asks for a sign. But, and, in a sense, there is much, given, for the benefit, of the disciples, as they are, for anyone else.

[10 : 05] You will notice, that in this passage, it says, say, this is the first, of his signs, that verse 11, Jesus did, that Cana, manifested, his glory, and his disciples, believed in him.

John has inserted, that, I think, because he's, suggesting to us, for their benefit, as well, as anybody else's. I want to speak, about two things.

I want to speak, about the wedding, in general terms, and then I want, to look, at the guests, that are at the wedding, and eavesdrop, into their, conversation.

So, we're kind of, gate crashing, this wedding, in Cana, of Galilee. Weddings, in Jesus's day, were occasions, of great celebration, and joy.

And especially, in small villages, like Cana, which was a very small village, of Galilee, the entire village, would come to the wedding.

[11 : 12] And I can relate to that, because when I was the minister, up in Loch Inver, in North West Sutherland, a beautiful fishing village, up there. I was there, for about seven years.

And the village hall, was there. It was the central focus, for any celebration, or anything, that was going on, and everybody, would be there. Including the children.

They were, as I say, weddings, on Jesus's day, were occasions, of great celebration, and joy. And the entire community, could be present. The wedding, would take place, of the home, in the home, of the bridegroom.

That's after, the bridegroom, had walked, to the home, of the bride. And, his bride, then, accompanied him, back, to his home.

And that's where, the wedding festivities, and celebrations, took place. And you know, that they, normally lasted, for seven days.

[12 : 23] Yeah. Seven days, of rejoicing. Jesus knew, they might have needed, a lot of wine. And the, other thing, is this, that, Jesus, his mother, had been invited, and Jesus, himself, had been invited, and his brothers, and his, disciples.

And, as you'll see there, John's, interest, in this particular, event, as he constructs, his gospel, is, is not so much, the wedding, oddly enough.

Verse 11, is where this narrative, is moving, relentlessly, towards. This, the first, of his, signs, Jesus did, at Cana, in Galilee, and manifested, his glory.

This is the, climax, of this narrative, and indeed, it's the, climax, of the gospel, of John. Just as we were thinking, this morning, we have seen, his glory.

This, was the launch, of Jesus, manifesting, his glory, as we read, throughout the gospel. And one of the ways, that he did that, was through those, signs, John, may also, have had in mind, I think, when he included, this event, in his, gospel, of the wedding, of all weddings, the marriage supper, of the lamb.

[14 : 13] I don't know, if you know, but, we are, seen, as the people of God, as the church, in the Bible, in both testaments, as the bride, of Christ.

Christ. And there's going, to be, a wonderful, joyous, and celebration, at the marriage supper, of the lamb.

Will you be there? Will you be there? Will I be there? Will you be there? I want, just to mention, as we, leave this, first part, which is the, smaller part, of my, my sermon, this evening, just a couple, of things, to notice, I've mentioned, about John, we'll have to, watch for John, he says, things that sound, normal, but they may, not be normal, he may have, a spiritual illusion, he may have, a scriptural illusion, he may have, a, a, a, a, for example, when John, was giving an account, of Judas, he ends, his account, of Judas, going out, and he says, Judas, went out, and then John, adds, and it was night, and of course, it may well, have been, factually, night, but for John, the people, are in darkness, and he has, great, truths, to teachers, and does teachers, using those, contrasts, of night, and day, darkness, and light, so that, just that, a little bit, added, and it was night, that's one of his, double speaks,

I think, and you notice, that this, narrative, John begins, with these words, on the third day, on the third day, and see, if you, go back, to, Exodus, 19, we'll just go back, to this, just now, Exodus, 19, and if we, read there, verses 10, and, and, and 11, and, I'll read, just above, verse 10 there, well no, okay, I'll read, verse 10, and 11, the Lord, said to Moses, this is the people of Israel, at Mount Sinai, they've been traveling, through the desert, they've arrived, at Mount Sinai, and this is where, the law is given, and we read this, the Lord, said to Moses, go to the people, and consecrate them, today, and tomorrow, and let them, wash their garments, and this is the bit, and be ready, for the third day, for on the third day, the Lord, will come down, and Mount Sinai, in the sight, of all, the people, and remember, this is the first sign, said John, and it happened, on the third day, and this, is a greater revelation, than the revelation, at Sinai, and John,

I believe, is using, allusion here, to help us, to see, that this, is the one, that is manifesting, his glory, the God man, and I want you, to notice, where this sign, took place, and in helping us, notice this, to go to Isaiah, again, chapter 9, so, John, begins, this, this account, of the wedding, and he says, there was a wedding, at Cana, in Galilee, notice, he didn't, find out, and there must have been, weddings, in Jerusalem, when he went, to Jerusalem, he started, tossing up, the tables, because they had made, his, the house of God, into a, a, a, a, a, a charade,

[19:00] Cana, of Galilee, where am I, Isaiah 9, verses 1, and 2, but there will be, no gloom, for her, who was in anguish, in the former time, he brought into content, the land of Zebulun, in the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time, he has made glorious, the way of the sea, the land beyond, Jordan, Galilee, of the Gentiles, the people who walked in darkness, have seen, a great light, here was, Israel's redeemer, in Galilee, in a small village, in Galilee, Cana, and here he was, not among the rich, and the great, and the aristocracy, and the priests, and the religious leaders, but on amongst, guess what, the people who were despised, by the southern Jews, by the southern Jews, another thing, as we have seen, the church is viewed, as the bride of Christ, and this is the most, intimate metaphor, for the relationship, of Christ, and his church, it's true, that the metaphor, in general, applies to, collective, the church, that's true, but nonetheless, there is an individual, dimension to that, and you know,

I think this is quite, remarkable, it's got an intimacy, if you like, like the song of Solomon, and that, he is, inviting us, to be betrothed, to him, and to be his bride, Jesus Christ is, because he wants to have, a real, close, living, intimate, relationship, with us, that we will know him, not just intellectually, not just theologically, not just as a preacher, but as someone, that we know, and that we can say, he walks with me, he talks with me, along life's narrow way, okay, and you know, the wonderful thing, as we think of, Christ, as our bridegroom, and we as his bride, he promises, that he will never leave us, nor forsake us, he promises, that he will never grow, out of love, for us, he promises, that his love, will never grow cold, it's, it's our love, isn't it, my love, that grows cold,

Christ's love, never grows cold, and even, when our love, is weak and faint, and shallow, and distant, his love, will never fail, why would anyone, spur, the love, that Jesus Christ, offers them, and turn down, his proposal, will you accept, will I accept, the eternal, ring of love, from Jesus Christ, so there is this, wedding, in Cana of Galilee, with all its illusion, and double speak, but let's, have a look, at some of the guests, firstly, there is Mary, the mother, of Jesus, mentioned there, in verse 3, when the wine, ran out, the mother, of Jesus, said to him, they have no wine, the wedding, the wedding, had been going along, swimmingly, and brilliantly, until,

Jesus' mother, realizes, that they've run out, of wine, how did she, come to know that, here's a guess, for you, she was part, of the hosting team, she, as a resident, in Cana of Galilee, and she was, possibly, helping, in the hosting, and you see, at a wedding, for people, to run out, of wine, was massively, embarrassing, embarrassing, so, she approaches, Jesus, and I want you, to know, she doesn't, request Jesus, to do anything, or perhaps, she is, subtly, and implicitly, but, taking just, the words, that she used, she just, informs him, of a fact, they've run out, of wine,

Mary, as I've said, and suggested, may well, have had, some responsibility, for contributing, to this element, of the feast, and, you know something, perhaps, John's got, a double truth, there as well, she says, doesn't she, they have no wine, we've just read, Isaiah 5, the vineyard, the turn, of Israel, is finished, they have no wine, they have no wine, remember, Jesus says, in John 15, I am the vine, I am the vine, I am the vine, I am the vine, notice,

[26 : 00] Jesus' response, verse 4, Jesus said to her, woman, what does this, have to do with me, my hour, has not yet come, now, if you're looking, for, signs, to see, what kind of, structure, John uses, in his gospel, well, you've got, the seven signs, the seven of them, I can't, enumerate them to you, just now, I've not got them, written down, there is the seven, I am sayings, of Jesus, I am the bread of life, I am the light, of the world, and so on, I am the good shepherd, but there is also, this other, structure, that John uses, in the lips of Jesus, my hour, my hour, my hour, Jesus says, woman, what does this, have to do, with me, now, this is a very, difficult, to, phrase, and,

I think, I've not written it down, but from memory, it's just two or three words, in the original, and it means something like, what, to me, and what, to you, that's literally, if you want a literal, interpretation, of the words, in the original language, that's it, what, to me, what, to you, and, yeah, my hour, has not yet come, and, it might well be, that Jesus, Jesus is, saying something like, you have your agenda, Mary, for meeting, this present need, in terms of, the actual wedding, you know, the natural wedding, but I have a different agenda, my agenda's not that, my agenda is always governed, by the hour, that I came for, my destiny of the cross, being lifted up, and the resurrection, and the exaltation, but here's the thing, still with Mary, she doesn't seem, to be put off, by what Jesus said, whatever it means, notice, how she responds, to his response, his mother said, to the servants, do whatever he tells you, now, what that suggests, to me,

I don't know, what it suggests, to you, but that suggests, to me, very significant, faith in Mary, Mary, Mary knows, knows, that it's enough, to inform Jesus, of her problem, of their problem, and there's a lesson, is there not, for us, whatever we're going through, wherever we are, whatever is happening, in our personal life, in our family life, in our spiritual life, and if there are problems, it's great, we can let, women are generally better, are they not, at sharing a problem, with their female peers, and sometimes, we men, are not as good as that, but I'll tell you this, all of us, should take our problem, to Jesus, like Mary did, and is that not, wonderful advice, you gave the servants, is that not, an advice, that we could, do well, to take heed of, before we leave Mary, at this wedding, do whatever he tells you, maybe, if the churches, in Scotland, including our own, for the last, 50 years, had been doing, what Jesus told us, remember, before he left, and at the end of Matthew, and he gave out, the great commission, teaching them, he said, teaching them, to observe, all things, that I have commanded you, the most Christ-like,

Christian, the most spiritual, Christian, Christian, Christian, is the most, Christ-like Christian, and the most, holy Christian, is not somebody, that retreats, from the world, and hides, in a monastery, or a ghetto, of their own, construction, the most, holy Christian, copies, Christ, and is out, mixing with people, and reaching out to them, with his love, and his light, and his healing, do whatever he tells you, do we?

If Christ, as we were thinking, this morning, can bring about, he became flesh, a change, we'll put it, inverted commas, of proportions, and magnitude, that are incalculable, what change, are we willing, to bring out, for the glory of God, in our day and age?

[32 : 36] Let's look then, at the servants, and at this point, John, very cleverly, in his narrative, is a short, short story, it's brilliant, now says John, I want you to notice, there were six stone, water jars there, but listen to what John says, for the Jewish rites, of purification, here was a symbol, of the Jewish religion, of Judaism, at that point, it was all external, it was all to do, with the washing, of hands and cups, why are your disciples, eating corn, on the Sabbath, why do your disciples, not wash their hands,

Jesus said, you've neglected, the weightier matters, of the law, justice, love, love, each holding, 20 or 30 gallons, 30 times 6, 180, 180, and as I say, he mentions their normal use, and I'm sure, that's an illusion, as well, and he mentions, their capacity, notice that, why does he do that, did they need to do that, was that so, essential, to his narrative, yeah, it was, what is it, that he's trying to convey, the extravagance, the lavishness, of what Jesus is about, of the grace, that he has come with, of the endless mercy, and love, for you and I, as all these Pharisees, and religious leaders, who far from believing in him, were plotting to kill him, and here is some unknown servants, accepting, the advice, of the mother of Jesus, do whatever he tells you, perhaps they thought, why is he asking us to fill, if the wife, they probably were,

I believe, that they were in, earshot of Mary, they were probably with her, hearing that conversation, between Mary and Jesus, however crazy, it seemed, the servants acted, on the word of Jesus, and took, after they had filled it, with water, and drew some of the water, took it to, the master, of the feast, there is a great contrast, as they're not there, between that water, used for Jewish, purification, and ritual, and external cleansing, and what Jesus, had come to do, was to change, that situation, and bring about, the greatest blessing, that cleanses our sins, and reconciles us, to God, and takes our sin, and guilt away, through his sacrifice, my sin, it was my sin,

I think, the hymn we were singing, that nailed him there, and, the other thing is that, I don't know if I, have it in this other, sheet, and, I can't see it, anyway, there's a verse, in the Old Testament, and it's this, phrase that's used, in the verse, the blood, of the grapes, the blood, of the grapes, the precious blood, of Jesus Christ, the best wine, of God's salvation, has come at last, the master, of the feast, and this is the final, person, that I'm looking at, and we're looking at Jesus, through all of this, of course, when the, master of the feast, tasted the water, now become wine, and didn't know, where it came from, although John adds in brackets, though the servants, who are drawn, the master of the feast, called the bridegroom, he called the bridegroom, this is a master stroke,

I think, by, John, because John knows, there was two bridegrooms there, remember Jesus, I forget what the parable is, but Jesus has got a parable, and somebody, he uses a parable in reply, I think it is, and they say, why do your disciples, not do this, and do that, he says, when the bridegroom, is there, you don't do these things, you have the joy, and the celebration, referring to himself, as the bridegroom, and John's got this bridegroom here, and the master of the feast, goes to the bridegroom, and says to him, everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine, but you have kept the good wine, until now, and I like that last word, now, because there's this other bridegroom, that is there, and he hasn't the foggiest, that this is a spiritual bridegroom, this is the bridegroom of all bridegrooms, and he is the one, that has brought, this great new wine, of the gospel, there's a sense, he's right, but he's applying the words, to the wrong bridegroom, he tasted that wine, there's a verse in the Psalms, isn't there, oh taste, and see, that the Lord is good, taste, that forgiveness, for yourself, taste, that hope, for yourself, savor, that love, of Christ, and its lavishness, have you tasted, the wine, that Jesus Christ offers, that wine, is a kind of, preview, and anticipation, in a general sense, of his final sign, the lifting up, of the cross, you know, if you go to John 12, what we've read, in this narrative, that Jesus says, my hour, has not yet come, but you see, when we go to, chapter 12, what do we read,

[42 : 03] Jesus answered, in verse 23, of chapter 12, the hour has come, the hour has come no longer is he saying my hour has not come now he's saying it has my hour has come for the son of man and look at the word again to be glorified the greatest seen in the greatest manifestation of his glory is on the cross and just as this narrative is inexorably moving towards verse 11 the entire gospel of John is moving towards the glory of Christ seen on the cross well that's me finished but before I finish my words

I want you to notice verse 12 of John chapter 2 I think it's quite an amazing little verse in a way after all this great manifestation of his glory through the sign after this Jesus went down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers and his disciples and they stayed there for a few days what a almost anti-climax and the humanity of Jesus and the dare I say the orderliness of his life at times just by going back and spending a few days with his brother he is no phantom he is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh but the word meant flesh and we have seen his glory

I hope that maybe today in a tiny tiny way that all of us have seen his glory and that we are filled with gratitude and thankfulness for that glory of this person and his work on the cross may the Lord bless these thoughts to us for his glory and for our eternal good well