

Instruction in an Insignificant Place

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Date: 03 October 2021

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- [0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to the New Testament to the Gospel of John chapter 2.
- The Gospel of John chapter 2. And we'll read the first 11 verses. John chapter 2 at the beginning.
- And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. And the mother of Jesus was there.
- And both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.
- Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.
- [1 : 39] And there was set there six waterpots of stone after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.
- Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast, and they bear it.
- When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the servants which drew the water knew, the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now.
- This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.
- May God bless to us the very reading of his truth. We'll sing once more from the same psalm that we've sung in already, Psalm 89, and we sing verses 13 to 16.
- [3 : 25] Psalm 89 at verse 13, Thou hast an arm that's full of power, thy hand is great in might, and thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.
- And we'll sing down to verse 16. They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly, and in thy righteousness shall the exalted be on high.
- Psalm 89 verses 13 to 16. the harmony verse 13 is in height.
- Ourertion verdadeira is not our nicts that exists there not any identity we owe Thank you.
- Thank you.
- [5 : 29] Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. passage of scripture which we read in the Gospel of John chapter 2 and as God would help me, I'd like to concentrate on verse 11. The Gospel of John chapter 2 verse 11.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory and his disciples believed on him.

[7 : 01] Why does the Bible call the miracles of Jesus signs? The word for miracles in the original here is the word signs and it's translated elsewhere in the authorized version as signs or signpost.

Why? Because it's pointing to something. It's giving directions what to look at and what to look for. It's saying whatever you do, see this.

What is it pointing to here? It's pointing to the glory of Christ. Christ's glory. This beginning of signs, beginning of miracles or signs did Jesus.

It's as if it said, through this first sign, this first miracle, Christ's divinity burst out.

The writer is conveying to us clearly, you couldn't but see the uniqueness of Jesus. Jesus was different.

[8 : 25] Jesus was unique. His glory just burst out. It became obvious. He was divine. He was not a normal human being. He was a divine human being.

Now, this beginning of miracles or beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.

In Cana of Galilee. Now, would any businessman launch a new product in an insignificant place?

Would you find Apple or Samsung producing a new iPhone in an insignificant place?

They choose Chicago. They choose New York. They choose the internationally famous cities of the world. But here's Christ. But here's Christ. Bursting forth his glory. Not in the capital of any great nation. But in Cana of Galilee.

[9 : 44] Now, when we were in the Holy Land, I actually asked the locals, where exactly was Cana of Galilee? And they said, we don't know. Insignificant. It's over there. Over there. We don't know exactly where.

And it does seem historians and archaeologists are not exactly sure precisely where it was because it was so insignificant.

But that's where Christ chose to begin his signs and his miracles. Somewhere where no business would ever launch a publicity campaign.

But of course, Christ is not seeking publicity. He's seeking truth. He's trying to expose reality.

Maybe you're here today. Maybe you're here today. And you think you're too insignificant for Jesus to take notice of you.

[10 : 58] Wrong. Wrong. Christ delights to surprise us with the unexpected.

And we might write people off as being insignificant. But Christ has an interest in them.

Isn't it amazing when Philip was preaching at the evangelistic crusade in Acts chapter 8. And they were having such success with converts.

They had to send to Jerusalem for more preachers. The campaign was a tremendous success. But you remember what God did with Philip.

He said, come here, Philip. I want you to leave that busy place where the gospel is flourishing. And I want you to go to a lonely desert for one man.

[12 : 01] The Ethiopian eunuch. I have my eye there on an Ethiopian. He's seeking me. I'm taking you away from the evangelistic campaign.

To go to one lonely man in a desert. Seeking truth. Seeking reality. That's Christ.

Interested in the insignificant. Don't write yourself off. Don't write off someone you see no hope for.

And a wedding. Come on. Would you launch a campaign? A new product? A wedding? When people are focused on other things?

But this is the time and the place for Christ chose to expose his glory.

[13 : 03] His divinity. His holiness. His blessed arrival on earth to save sinners. What lessons we are taught here.

We conclude too quickly, don't we? God's not going to do anything here. And God's not likely to do anything there. God won't work in that situation.

You see, we want to put God in boxes. This is to be right first. That's to be right next. This is the order to go on. But Christ surprises us.

He bursts out his glory and says, I've come to a call sinners. And there's one qualification only required of those who I'm to save.

They're sinners. Sinners. Christ came into the world to save sinners. Are you a sinner?

[14 : 02] You're qualified for his salvation. Now, why does John record this miracle?

Was it the most profound miracle? Was it the most edifying miracle? Why does he record? If you turn to the end of the Gospel of John, chapter 20, verse 30, John tells us, And many other signs, same word as miracle, many other signs, many other miracles, truly did Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

Could he have missed this miracle out? You'd say, well, a bit embarrassing actually. Why did he write it?

Now, it's interesting. John wrote his Gospel 20 years after the other three Gospels were written.

Think of that. 20 years after the others were written. You say, well, John, if you're going to write a fourth Gospel, remember, Matthew's written the Gospel, Mark's written the Gospel, Luke's written the Gospel, give us something new.

[15 : 41] Don't repeat things that they've told us already. But what do we find? What do we find John writing? He writes a fourth account of feeding the 5,000.

He said, John, Matthew's written about it, Mark's written about it, Luke's written, don't you bother writing about it? He writes four times. The fourth time about feeding the 5,000.

He writes for the fourth time about Christ's entry into Jerusalem. You say, well, do you really need, if you're writing one, to write what they've all written already?

Or you could say to John, well, John, Luke, if you're going to repeat things, repeat what we could do with hearing more of them. I'd love to know more about the temptation.

I'd love to know more about the transfiguration. I'd love to, we could do with reading more about that. What about the Sermon on the Mount? Man, there's lots more we'd love to hear about the Sermon on the Mount.

[16 : 50] What about the second coming, John? Write about that. He doesn't mention any of these things. He writes, the only one to write about this wedding in Cana of Galilee.

What does that teach us? Doesn't it teach us this? The real author of the Gospel of John is God, the Holy Spirit.

He's the real author. He nudged John's arm and said, put this down, put that down, leave that just now. Leave that down, put this in.

The real author of Scripture is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit moved holy men of old to write what they wrote and there are things to learn from this first miracle, first sign where Jesus manifested his glory.

Now there are a couple of things we need to mention about it all. You might say, well, well, making water, changing water into wine.

[18 : 12] It is clear that it was alcoholic, but not very strong wine. Those who study these things tell us, I remember reading that the alcoholic content of the wine was equivalent to, well, you would need five bottles of this wine to have the same alcoholic content as one martini.

Now, I don't know much about these things, but maybe you do. But that is the strength of the alcohol used. And do remember, you might say, hey, this filled the place.

Did they need all that wine? Well, do remember that in these days, wedding feasts went on for up to a week.

And at some time during that week, almost the whole village would be there. So we're talking about supplying it for a whole week, for a whole village.

but the most important thing to note about this is why John wrote it. The Spirit moved John to write it.

[19 : 27] In other words, the Spirit gave John the mind to write it. And he tells us in that verse I read in chapter 20, verse 30. Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written.

Why? These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that believing you might have life through his name.

why is this miracle in the Bible? That when you read it, you might believe.

And in believing, you're given eternal life. So it's worth looking at. It's worth studying.

I always remember an elder saying, in fact, it was A.W. Pink. You've heard of A.W. Pink. He said on one occasion when handling down his studies of the scriptures, he said, remember, the word of God is not meant to be read.

[20 : 52] The word of God is meant to be studied. So let's have a look at it. The wedding. The wine failed.

That's the word chosen by the Spirit, failed. You see, we miscalculate. It failed to satisfy. It failed to be enough. We miscalculate even earthly things, even good earthly things which God give us doesn't satisfy.

running out of wine in this context was not merely an acute embarrassment. It was actually an insult.

In fact, I've read it was actually, it could actually be an offence of law. The equivalent today, I suppose, of a hotel manager forgetting a booking.

And it's here we see the compassion of Christ. Why was he moved to do something here? He felt sorry for the governor.

[22 : 06] Then, not just the embarrassment, he might lose his job over it. He felt sorry for him. The compassion, the tender compassion of Christ rescuing the host from his dilemma.

Now, Mary tells, says, that when the mother of Jesus saith unto them, they have no wine.

And the mother speaks to them. Now, would Mary have expected a miracle to happen? Christ, her son, had never performed any miracles, especially at weddings.

He had never performed a miracle before, and yet, she tells him, tell the problem to Jesus. Tell Jesus they've run out of wine. Now, she could have said what you and I might very well often say in situations, no need to tell Jesus.

He knows everything. He's God. No need to tell Jesus. Well, that's not what we learn from this miracle. Tell Jesus everything.

[23 : 26] Tell Jesus what you're feeling. Tell Jesus what you've done. Tell Jesus you're a sinner. Tell Jesus you don't understand.

Tell everything to Jesus. That's one of the lessons of this miracle. prayer is for changing us, not for changing the circumstances.

Now, why should we pray if Jesus already knows something? If God, if Jesus has ordained whatsoever comes to pass, which he has, is there any need to pray?

Yes. Why? Because in ordaining whatsoever comes to pass, Christ has ordained that his people would pray for it.

There is no greater encouragement than to pray for something, don't have a mind to pray for something, hugely encouraging.

[24 : 40] God includes our prayers in his decree for whatever he brings to pass. It's a tremendous encouragement if you still remember to pray for someone after years, after years.

If you still remember to pray for them, what an encouragement that is. I can't remember who it was that said, the child of many prayers cannot be lost.

And we're taught that in this miracle. When God has no purpose of mercy for someone, nobody will be constantly praying for them.

God moves his people to pray for what he has ordained will come to pass.

That's hugely encouraging. That's a tremendous spur and stimulation for us to pray for what we know he likes doing. And he would have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

[26 : 00] Who are you praying for? Have you been praying for somebody for years? There's not the slightest improvement. Not the slightest sign that it's coming to pass.

Take heart. Take heart. God could easily make you forget it. If you've still got a mind for that prayer, God has put it into your heart.

Because he puts into the heart of his people what he has decreed will come to pass. Whether we'll be alive to see it or not is an entirely different issue.

And she says to him in verse 5, whatever he says to you, do it. That's interesting. Whatever he says to you, do it.

If you go to Jesus with a problem, remember this, he's likely to tell you to do something. You bring something to Christ, he'll likely point out to you something to do.

[27 : 13] You see, by nature, we want God to do everything. I mean, wouldn't it be easy for ministers if God just sent revival?

We wouldn't have to evangelise, we wouldn't have to do outreach, we wouldn't have to witness, let God do it all. Wouldn't it be so easy? But that's not the way he's ordained.

He's ordained that his people witness, that his people evangelise, that his people testify. That's the way he's ordained, to bring people in through our testimony and through our witness, which is extremely clear in a couple of chapters further on with the woman of Samaria.

Do we pray because we want to obey Christ? If we pray about a problem to God, he'll ask us to do something.

Are we ready to do it? Are we willing to do it? Are we prepared to do it? It's our fallen nature that says, God, just do it instantly, I won't have to bother doing anything.

[28 : 35] That's not the way, that's not grace, that's not the way the spirit works. He lays out to us what he'd have us do, what he'd have us say, how he'd make us act, Christ has authority to tell us to do things and they often seem foolish, they often are embarrassing and are definitely sometimes very awkward.

That's why we need strength, that I should always pray, Lord, give me grace to be obedient. I came across some time ago, the fact we don't find the reformers, the Puritans, speaking much about guidance.

A lot of Christians today are obsessed with guidance. I don't want to make one move until I know that's what God wants me to do. And you go back to the old reformers and Puritans and all their writings and all their works, very little about guidance, but an awful lot about obedience.

Their concern was obedience. And if we are always, always in the path of duty, if our focus is obeying God, doing his will, then we won't have the same problem with guidance at all.

He'll be doing his will. There are ten commandments. Keep them. And you have a little problem with guidance. Oh, I'm not saying it's easy, but with regard to the aspect of guidance, obedience, keep the commandments however hard, however difficult, however foolish it may seem, however awkward for us.

[30 : 39] However embarrassing. And that's just the experience of the enthusiastic Christian.

Now, there were six water pots. Six water pots of water. Now, as I said, I went on for a full week, and at the end sometime during that week, part of almost the whole village would effectively be attending.

Six water pots is an awful lot. It's 120 to 180 gallons of holy water. The water was set aside, it was set aside for purification.

Verse six, there were six water pots of stone after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, reserved for purification rites.

It was like communion bread set aside for the communion, as also the wine, of course. the purists would have nothing to do with this.

[31 : 59] The ultra-orthodox Jews would never ever have allowed this to happen, but they were only looking at things. We're listening here to the Son of God.

We're listening here to Jesus Christ. Now, when was the miracle actually realised?

You see, there are actually miracles going on all the time, but we don't realise it. The feeding of the 5,000.

Essentially, that was just the contraction in time of what is going on all the time. What was it? Six? The equivalent of six rolls, feeding 5,000 people?

Well, think of the farmer. He has a small seed potato. He plants it in the ground. That small seed potato in six months times produces a whole lot of potatoes.

[33 : 14] That little thing has grown into that. It's expanded into that. That's going on all the time. But it takes months to happen and we don't realise it's a miracle of God.

He plants seed and in a few weeks or months it's growth. That's a miracle. God's doing that all the time. But in most of the miracles recorded in the Bible, you see, the time is contracted, it's reduced.

But to go back to the question, when was the miracle realised? when the master of ceremonies tasted the wine, that's when it was realised.

And it's the same with the gospel. You have to taste and see that God is good. You see, in our fallen natures, we say, ah, I'll become a Christian when this happens.

I'll become a Christian when I understand that, when I do the next thing. There's conditions, we're setting conditions first. When this happens, we'll do it.

[34 : 27] But God says, taste and see that God is good. You see, the bottom line in Christianity is always faith.

It's always the bottom line, faith. You've got to trust, you've got to depend. Faith goes beyond reason. It never goes against reason, but it goes beyond it.

We're to taste, we're to take God at his word. Christ says, look, come to me. You've got loads of problems to sort out. And what do you say? What do we in our fallen nature say?

Well, I'll come to Christ when I sort myself out first. When I get over this problem, then I'll come to Christ. My friend, you'll never get over it until you come to Christ.

You'll never conquer your problem until Christ conquers your problem. You've to come to Christ and Christ will deal with your sin.

[35 : 31] Come with your sins to Jesus and trust Christ to save you and deliver you. Well, in conclusion, this is all about as verse our text tells us, it's about the glory of Christ being manifested, bursting forth.

And I just want to speak about this, mention the glory of Christ in just three very extremely brief headings. First, transcendent authority.

Authority is not something you can manufacture. Authority is, it just exists in a certain place. Have you ever seen royalty?

Whenever, I always remember when our children were very young, we were on holiday in Lewis as a matter of fact, and the royal yacht Britannia was out in the bay.

And I always remember on holiday, and our children always seemed to awaken early on holiday, they came bursting into our bedroom, I don't know, five or six in the morning, said, Dad, Dad, Mum, the Queen is here, the Queen is here.

[36 : 56] And of course we didn't believe them, but they persisted and there was nothing else for it. We said, how do you know it's the Queen? How do you know it's her boat? Oh, you can just tell, you can just tell Dad, you've got to come and see it.

And I remember we did trudge through whatever hour of the night it was, and there outside, the royal yacht Britannia, you just knew, you just, the royalty, the majesty, it just struck out the security vessels, everything that was around it, very ugly, you can just tell.

You need to meet Christ, to see his authority, his royalty, his majesty, his greatness.

He's the one you need to meet, transcendent authority, and you know you should obey him whenever you see him. Second, transforming power.

Christ can transform you. He can transform anyone. But here's the thing, he's got all power to create all God and Christ, of course, Christ is God, all he had to do was speak.

[38 : 25] He spoke and it happened. God spoke and brought matter into existence just by speaking. Brought it into existence by speaking. That's his power. He can create simply by speaking. But, but, when it comes to recreation, it's a little bit different.

There's something else to be done first. He cannot just speak and recreate a corrupt thing.

There has to be atonement. There has to be payment for the sin. But, here's the good news. That's taken place.

That has taken place at the place called Calvary. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And now, all he's got to do is say the word.

[39 : 36] Your sins are forgiven, y'all. But, you must come to him. You must come to him. transcendent authority, transforming power to change your nature.

And thirdly, tender compassion and love. Would you consider this miracle necessary?

Christ had compassion on the host. He felt sorry for the problem the man was in. His job was on the line.

The embarrassment was not so serious as the seriousness of his misdemeanor. Christ has compassion on sinners.

Tender compassion. you think he mightn't be interested in you because you're such a sinner. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong.

[40 : 48] Christ came to save sinners. The gospel is Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

And may God, the Holy Spirit, grant that every one of us would know his transcendent authority, his transforming power, his tender compassion.

May God, the Holy Spirit, make his truth effectual to every one of us. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our Father in heaven, be pleased to take the things of Christ and to make them ours.

Today, this is the market day of the soul. Come today into our lives. Keep us, O Lord, in your love. Keep us in your fear. Hear us in mercy, answer us in peace, as we pray all in Christ's name and for Christ's sake alone.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.