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Water turned into wine

That your joy may be full

John 2:1-11

Practical meaning

The first sign Jesus performed, according to the evangelist John, took place at the wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11). The Lord was invited there as a guest, along with His disciples. It is always good to involve Him in the big but also in the small things in our lives. His presence brings blessing and gives special meaning to every event in our lives. His presence is important not only at a wedding ceremony, but throughout our lives.

The wedding party (it was more than a reception), took place at the house of the bridegroom and lasted for as long as a week. The groom's family had to provide for all the food and drink and it would give them a bad name if the wine, the usual beverage, ran out. The wine was drunk at various stages of development. Possibly we should think of young or new wine, or wine mixed with water. In this case, however, they quickly ran out of supplies, which posed a major problem. Mary, the mother of Jesus, saw it and tried to help. She went to the Lord with this problem, hoping that He could do something about it.

This was not wrong, of course, but it was not her job to give Him orders. His hour had not yet come. Christ, as the Son, was always completely dependent on the Father. His mild rebuke, however, did not diminish the trust Mary placed in her Son. She went to the servants and told them to do all that the Lord would command them. This is a valuable lesson for each of us, no matter what our situation is:

"Whatever He says to you, do it" (v. 5). Mary should not be honored as a mediator, she only refers to her Son!

Then the Lord instructed the servants to fill with water six vessels that were set there in view of the purification rites of the Jews; and they filled them up to the brim. According to reliable sources, these water barrels of stone had enormous dimensions: each barrel could hold about 90 liters. Then He ordered the water to be drawn and brought to the leader of the feast, the master of ceremonies. Meanwhile, the water had turned into wine of excellent quality, to the amazement of the master of ceremonies and of the bridegroom, who was even blamed for the fact that he had kept the good wine until then!

Wine in Scripture is often a picture of joy. Therefore, if the wine is lacking, there is no joy. Some people have great joy in their lives, but it is only temporary. What happens when the music stops, the guests have left, and all the excitement is over? True joy is not found in the circumstances. It is about a source of joy in our hearts, a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). The cleansing water of the Word gives joy within. Christ came to give us life in abundance, and also joy in abundance (John 10:10). If we obey His Word and keep His commandments, we can even share in the joy of the Lord Himself. His joy then remains in us, and our joy is completed or fulfilled (John 15:11 and other places). Think again of the water vessels, which were filled to the brim!

Prophetic meaning

Because the Lord turned the water to wine, He displayed His glory and showed that He surpassed every earthly host. He proved to be the true Host of the people of Israel, and He will be the Source of true joy at the coming wedding feast of Yahweh and His people. But the joy of the coming Kingdom follows the purification of His people. Symbolically speaking, the cleansing water must first do its work, as we see in the book of Zechariah. For there will be a fountain opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the purpose of cleansing from sin (Zech. 13:1-2).

This will happen at the end of the Great Tribulation, at the return of the Lord, when they will see Him as the wounded Savior (Zech. 12:10-14; Rev. 1:7). The relationship between Yahweh and His people will then be restored. Israel will call Him, "my Husband," and no longer, "my Baal" (i.e. lord, or master). Then He will give her again her vineyards, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. He will betroth her

forever, and the heavens shall answer the earth, and it shall answer His people (see Hos. 2:13-22).

Thus He will be the true Host and Bridegroom of His people in the great day to come, when He will reveal His glory. That is the prophetic meaning of the first sign Jesus did at Cana in Galilee. He revealed His glory and His disciples believed in Him (John 2:11). The same is true for us. But soon faith will be changed to sight, in the day when He will manifest His glory forever. Every eye will see Him, every knee will bow before Him, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. It will be the day of the joy of His heart (cf. Song 3:11). The blessing will flow richly, the joy will be full.

As believers from the Gentiles, we do not belong to the people of Israel, but together with all true believers we form the heavenly family of God's children. But for us, too, the secret of true joy is (1) obedience to His commandments and (2) the implied cleansing by the water of the Word (John 14:21, 23; 15:3, 7-12; Eph. 5:26). "Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5). This beginning of the Lord's signs shows that He Who walked here on earth as a heavenly Stranger and was not accepted by His own was none other than "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8; Jas. 2:1). If we listen to His Word, He will allow us to share in His own joy – of which the wine is a type (John 15:11; 16:22-24; 17:13; Phil. 4:4; 1 John 1:4).

