

What is the point of a miracle? The point of a miracle is not just to show how powerful somebody is, to impress other people by what you're doing. The devil, after all, can produce counterfeit miracles, and he certainly only wants to impress you, because he's trying to deceive you. But when God does miracles He's trying to make a point, to say something about himself. And for that reason, miracles always have a specific purpose. And that's also true of the miracle which we heard about in our Gospel reading for today, Jesus turning water into wine at Cana. He's not just turning water into wine because he can, as if he was just powerful enough to do it and he felt like doing it to save them from an embarrassing situation. No, Jesus does this miracle to say something about himself and to show his disciples who he is. That's why we hear in verse 11 of our reading: "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him." So his disciples see his glory. They see who he is, and they believe in him because of it. And John invites us to do the same as we hear about this miracle today.

So there are three things, then, that we need to notice about this miracle. And the first one of these is that this happened, as John says, on the third day. The third day from what? we might ask. Three days after what came before in John chapter 1, where Jesus is speaking to Nathaniel. But if you go to the beginning of that passage, it says "the next day," so that one is also pointing back to what came before, where Jesus is calling the first disciples. But that one also at the beginning of that passage says "the next day," so we go back again to find John calling Jesus the Lamb of God. But yet again at the beginning of that passage, it says "the next day." So the very first day in this series is John testifying about himself. John saying in John chapter 1 that he is a voice crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said!" So John saying that is day one. And then John calling Jesus the Lamb of God is day two. And then Jesus calling the first disciples is day three. And Jesus speaking to Nathaniel is day four, which means three days after that is the wedding at Cana on the seventh day.

Now, why would John go to all this trouble? What is he trying to say? Is he just trying to be careful about his dates, to make sure that he has them all in order? Not at all. John is saying something specific. Because these seven days point back to another act of God, and that is the creation. Because God created the world in six days, Christians, and on the seventh day he rested. So Jesus performing this miracle on the seventh day shows that this is a new creation. This is the beginning of something entirely new. In Jesus, all things are being remade. In Jesus, all things are becoming new, and he shows that by turning water into wine. That's also true for us, Christians. For those who believe in Jesus, we are being re-created, made a new creation in him, turning away from the old way of sin, turning away from what we once were to become a new creation through his power. We see all of this through the first miracle which shows that Christ has come to make all things new.

The second thing that we need to notice here is similar to the first, and that is the six stone water jars that were at the feast. John tells us that these water jars were there for the Jewish rites of purification. But that doesn't mean just washing their hands, as if they wash their hands before they eat the way that we do, although they certainly did that too. No, as Mark chapter 7 says, they used it for so much more. Mark 7 says: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches." Now, that

word "properly" in these verses could also be translated as washing "with a fist." So in other words, washing in a ceremonial kind of way. Something you do for religious reasons, not for sanitary reasons. Sort of like how we might pray before our meals. This is what they would do before they eat. They would wash using this water out of these stone jars. And so it is these jars in particular that Jesus commands to be filled up with water, even to the very brim.

But remember, Christians, John says that these jars were used for the Jewish rites of purification, which means, in other words, they belong to the old way. They are part of the old which is passing away, part of what Christ has come to replace. In other words, when Christ came, there's going to be no more need for these kinds of things. Their purpose has been fulfilled. They are symbols of what is passing away. And Jesus commands them to be filled up to the very brim, because he shows that the time is now complete. The time has filled up. The hour has come for these things to pass away, because the new is now here. The old pointed to the new, but the purpose of the old is now complete. Now, don't get me wrong here. The Old Testament was important. After all, this is how God dealt with his people through all of those many centuries. But the Old Testament always pointed towards what was coming. It always pointed towards Jesus who would be its fulfillment. And now that Christ is here, there is no more need. The time of shadows has come to an end. The time of the new light found in Christ has now begun. Because Jesus is something better than what came before. Jesus is something greater than what came before, because Jesus is the new wine.

And so the third and the last thing that we need to see in this passage is the master of the feast speaking to the bridegroom. The master of the feast says that normally what people do is serve the good wine first, because that's when you want to impress people. Put your best foot forward, make a good impression right from the beginning. But then once everybody's drunk, and they don't care anymore, then you can give them the poor wine. Because then they're too drunk to notice or they just don't care. But this bridegroom has done the opposite. He has saved the good wine until now. And when we see that in light of everything else in this passage, it becomes very clear. Jesus is the new wine. Jesus has been saved for us until now, because God has given him to us for the forgiveness of our sins. The new, Christians, has come. The old is passing away.

So why then, why would we hold on to the old when the new has come? Why would we turn back to what is passing away when Jesus is now here? Because when John says that the disciples believed in him, he doesn't mean that they just knew that he did this, as if they knew that he performed the miracle. The Jews, after all, could not deny that he did miracles. No one could deny that he was doing these things. They simply said he was using demons to do it. Rather, when John says that the disciples believed in him, it means that they saw him for who he was. They saw his glory, and they trusted in him, turning away from what they once were to become something new in him. They had become a new creation through what Jesus was doing.

It's just like Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come." The old here referring to the old way of the flesh, the way of sin, the way of darkness. In Jesus Christ, all of that is coming to an end. All of that is passing away. So why would we try to hold on to it any longer? Why would we turn back to what we once were? That way is disappearing. We are called to be something new in Jesus Christ. This is why Paul goes on to say: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." If we are new creations in

Christ, we have been reconciled to God. God has put back together what was broken. God has made new what had fallen apart. Our guilt has been washed away by the blood of Christ. Our sins have been forgiven. Our debts have been paid in Jesus. All of this has happened because Christ has now come.

But since Christ has come, since the new is here, Paul goes on to say: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." Be reconciled to God. Don't leave this place today and go back to what you once were. Turn away from the ways of darkness. Turn away from the ways of sin. Don't walk as the Jews once did. But rather, Christians, call on Jesus Christ this day. Call on him and confess your sins. And God is faithful and just to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. God will make you new once more, to create in you a clean heart, one which will praise him in truth and in righteousness.

And that's why Jesus performed these miracles, Christians. Not to be impressive, not simply for its own sake. Jesus did all of these things so that we would see the truth about him. And knowing the truth, we would become something new. Because by believing in him and confessing our sins, turning away from the old, we find a new and eternal life in Jesus Christ. Let us turn to him today and call on his name.

Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, you have made all things new through your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to walk after you in true righteousness, so that we may finally see you and glorify you forever. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.