

THE FIRST SIGN OF JESUS

John 2:1-25

Key verse 2:11

"This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put his faith in him."

We thank the Lord who came into this world as the Lamb of God to bear our sin and that of the whole world. Through the testimony of John the Baptist we were allowed to look at Jesus and accept Him as the Lamb of God anew. We were encouraged, like Andrew and Philip, to invite the students to the campus so that through one-to-one Bible study and fellowship they could personally experience who Jesus is.

Today, through chapter 2, we want to reflect on the first sign of Jesus, which revealed Jesus' glory. This sign reveals that Jesus has the power to change tasteless water into delicious wine. Jesus also changes our meaningless life like water into a glorious, meaningful, tasty life like wine, so that we may even be used as a blessing for this generation. We also want to learn about how the servants, through obedience, prepared the environment in which Jesus' glory was revealed. Let us prepare the environment in which Jesus' work of change can take place in the hearts of the students and in our next generation.

1. The First Sign of Jesus (1-11)

After Jesus had called his first disciples to discipleship, he attended a wedding celebration in Cana of Galilee. Perhaps they were relatives of Mary, who had also invited Jesus and his disciples. A wedding is usually a glorious and joyful celebration. It is not an ordinary worldly event. God founded and blessed the first marriage already in the Garden of Eden. Furthermore, the wedding feast was often used in the Bible as an image for the Kingdom of God. In Israel, a wedding celebration usually lasted several days and was an important event. However, in the middle

of this joyful and meaningful celebration, a serious problem unexpectedly arose. Apparently Mary was one of the first to notice that the wedding couple had run out of wine. Thus the celebration threatened to end in a medium catastrophe and great shame for the bridal couple. We see here that Maria was not just there as a guest, but that she took care of many things very responsibly and with host spirit, even more than the food master. She was perhaps similar to M. Sarah Chang, who always prepared the surroundings for God's work with host spirit.

Let us look at verse 3: "When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine". Mary did not begin to run frantically back and forth, talking about the lack, irresponsibility or poor preparation of the bridal couple. Rather, Mary turned in silence to the one who could really solve this problem, namely Jesus: "Jesus! They have no more wine." Although Jesus had not yet appeared as the Messiah, she believed that Jesus was the Son of God, and that he had the possibility to solve this problem as well.

Mary's turning to Jesus corresponds to prayer. It came from the absolute trust that she could do nothing, but that Jesus could do everything. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7) In other words, Jesus rejoices when we come to Him with all our requests, asking Him, whether the requests are small or large. Whoever asks will be given, because our Lord Jesus is the true problem solver. With this trust we may bring all the concerns of our sheep, our children, our house churches and also the work of God to Jesus. We may also

bring the concerns of the young people in Europe to Jesus. Our early morning prayer, our house church prayer and our campus prayer is the expression of our faith that we cannot do anything, but that God can do everything.

Let us look at verse 4: "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." Here Jesus seemed to be very rugged and dismissive of his mother. Jesus asked her what it was to her anyway. Then he said that his time had not yet come. Jesus' time refers to the hour of his crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus had come to fulfill the salvation work of God through His death and resurrection and it was not yet time for that. In the same way, God will not immediately fulfill every one of our prayers, but He will do that which glorifies Him and is according to His schedule.

Jesus' mother Mary was by no means discouraged by Jesus' answer. On the contrary, through faith she began to actively prepare the environment for the work of Jesus. Prayer also always means to actively prepare. Let's read verse 5: "His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Mary began to prepare the environment by encouraging the servants to cooperate with Jesus through the obedience of faith. Mary encouraged them to obey the word of Jesus beyond their own imagination and calculation and thus to experience the mighty work of God.

In this believing and obedient environment, Jesus could do his work. First, Jesus gave them the instruction to fill the six jars lined up for purification with water. It was not easy because they had to bring about 600 liters of water. This meant a lot of work at a time when not every house had its own water pipe, but everything had to be scooped out of a well with buckets. But the servants obeyed and even filled the jugs to the brim, to the top. Their obedience was not relative, but absolute. Then Jesus commanded them to take the food away from the food master. This command was even more difficult than the first one because they could easily embarrass themselves with the Master of Food, perhaps even lose their jobs. But by faith they obeyed this time also and brought him a cup. Now the servants must have held their breath. The porter drank and said, "Delicious!"

Let us read verses 9 and 10: "They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that

had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." The food master was more than astonished when he found the wine in his cup, which was even more delicious than the previous one. Perhaps he had now expected a poor wine diluted with water. But it was the best wine. He even reproached the groom why he had held back the best so far. In this way he testified to the mighty miracle of Jesus' power to change, without knowing what had happened. Only the servants who had worked together in obedience recognized what Jesus had actually done. Verse 11 says: "This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him."

Here we learn that Jesus' glory is first revealed through His power to change. Many people wish to experience a supernatural miracle. Some think that they could then believe in God better. The first sign Jesus did was to change from ordinary water to glorious wine. The first sign of Jesus is that His power to change a person's life is revealed. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" A man in Christ is a new creature. Jesus does not change us just a little. He doesn't make our lives just a little bit better. Jesus makes us a new creature, a new creation, an ordinary tasteless sinner is transformed into a blessed child of God like a delicious wine.

Saul was a persecutor of the church, who tried to destroy the Christians with rage and snorting. He was a harmful man. But when he met Jesus, he was changed into a humble disciple of Jesus and a diligent apostle who testified the good news of the Gospel all the way to Rome. He became a man who led many people to eternal life. John was a quick-tempered man who competed with Peter. But the love of Jesus changed him into an apostle of love and good company. No one could even approach a sin-sick lonely woman from Samaria. But when she met Jesus and received his living water, she was transformed into a joyful missionary for her whole city.

M. Samuel Lee grew up during the Korean War. Living as a half-orphan in a poor and destroyed country made him very fatalistic. But when he met Jesus through Ephesians 2:10, he found the meaning of existence to be a work of God. He was transformed into a good shepherd for the fatalistic students in Korea. Through his influence, many students were also changed and now serve the world mission as a royal priesthood. Sh. Anja used to live with the habit of giving up quickly. Her favorite word was "I cannot". But in Jesus she was changed so that she held on to Mark 9:23 and was allowed to glorify God by graduating. Now she prepares every week with great joy the environment for Sunday worship service with her double bass. In the past, Sh. Danke Peter was a master of grumbling about himself, about the conditions and about the others. But in Jesus he is always full of gratitude for God's grace and prays perseveringly for his three daughters, for Mersina and for the students at the Rheinbach University.

This transforming power of Jesus is also the true hope for the young people. Many young people think that they cannot be changed. They think that their laziness, their search for recognition, their rebellion would simply be part of their character. Some think that they must always remain a bad student. But our Lord Jesus has power to change. Jesus has power to change tasteless water into delicious wine. If someone is in Christ, he is a new creature. Jesus changes our old being that loves sin and draws us to sin, so that we are changed into God's children and as a royal priesthood proclaim His good deeds. Our life does not remain meaningless like water, which at some point is poured into the sink and disappears, but like wine we will be used as Jesus' witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Jesus' miracle of change does not happen accidentally or suddenly. It happens where people pray and where they prepare the good spiritual environment through obedience to Jesus' words. Without practically obeying God's Word, we should not expect to see Jesus' work. Those who have obeyed and held fast to a Word of God were allowed to see the glory of Jesus. Sh. Noah was allowed to experience this mystery when, after graduating from high school, he obeyed God's direction and flew to New Jersey to receive spiritual training instead of indulging his worldly ambitions. God not only entrusted him with the best place to study, but also raised

him up as a shepherd for the Hochschule Rhein-Sieg. At the beginning of the new millennium there were many slanders against the work of God. In such an environment, Sh. John could have thought very resignedly or fatalistically and pitied himself. But he seized the spiritual identity as a royal priesthood and challenged it to exist in an excellent grammar school among pure German students. When he obeyed God's word, God gave him the victory of faith, so that he was allowed to graduate at the top of his class and reveal God's glory.

Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:5 that we have received the grace to establish obedience of faith among all Gentiles in Jesus' name. Today, the word "obedience" is often misunderstood and equated with a slavish mentality. But obedience to Jesus comes from the love relationship and trust in His power. Jesus said that whoever loves him obeys his word. Therefore, we may courageously stand up for establishing the obedience of faith among all Gentiles. Let us prepare the environment so that God's transforming power will be revealed in the sheep and in our next generation, and they may glorify God through their transformed lives.

2. The New Temple, Jesus Christ (12-25)

In verses 13 to 17 we learn that Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover. But he was not like many pilgrims who were driven by the popular mood. Rather, Jesus took the spiritual condition of the temple very seriously and did not remain idle. The Passover commemorated the grace of salvation from Egypt, and people should give thanks and worship to God. But the temple had become like a department store, full of animal dealers and money-changers, each running their own business. Let's read verses 14-16, Jesus tied some ropes together to form a scourge and drove the traders all out. Jesus was not indifferent, but wanted to restore the place where people could worship and meet God.

Also today we see that the true worship of God has often been lost. Many churches have degenerated into a pure organization that manages the money but does not lead people to God. We see quite a few who come to church to have human fellowship, to have their problems solved or to fish for a partner. Where God and God's Word is no longer the focus of attention, but human affairs, Jesus is very angry.

It is said that the priests at that time only allowed animals for sacrifice, which had to be bought expensively in the temple. In other words, people were no longer allowed to bring their own sacrificial animals, but only what was tested and legitimized by the priests. Everything had to be done according to their rules and God's house became a department store. God wants us to come to him with our hearts out of gratitude and with devotion, to give him our best. This is not done through an organization or by following rules, but by giving our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice pleasing to God. Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is why we always cleanse ourselves from all things that distract, seduce and defile us. Let us come to our true temple Jesus with the right motive that we worship God and can be used as His people. Let us also cleanse our own lives from all wrong motives, from the distraction of the internet and social media, so that we can be used as God's temple.

When the Jewish leaders questioned the authority of Jesus, he told them that they would tear down this temple and he would rebuild it in three days. (19) Jesus was talking about His body. But the Jews were confused and could only think of the Temple of stone. The Herodian Temple had been built in 46 years. It was very splendid, made of large blocks of stone and covered with gold, but spiritually it was very corrupt. Jesus, however, is the true temple. He gave his life as the perfect sacrifice for our sins on the cross and he rose again on the third day. He is the true temple where we can meet God, worship God and live as God's people. God wants to have true worshipers who worship Him in spirit and in truth.

It is significant that every time people asked for miracles, Jesus referred to His death on the cross and His resurrection. Miraculous signs do not help people. The disciples had a different attitude towards Jesus' words. They kept them in their heart. After the resurrection, they remembered and believed the Scriptures and what Jesus had said. (22)

Through today's passage we have come to know the transforming power of Jesus. Jesus changes our lives from a useless worldly life of sin to a glorious life as a child of God revealing God's glory. Through obedience of faith, let us

prepare the environment in which young people will experience God's transforming work and be transformed from tasteless water to delicious wine. Let us fill the jars of one-to-one Bible study to the top by forming 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams so that they can be used for spiritual revival in Europe and for building three bases for M-Mission.