

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Whatever Jesus Tells You
John 2:1-25

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #...). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Have the points for **The meaning of the sign or miracle of the water into wine** written on a white board or make copies for each participant from the material given at the end of the worship time. Discuss each point.

Worship Time Leader:

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Whatever Jesus Tells You – 16-40-02-en

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Music Sources:

Yes, Lord, Yes, *The Worship Hymnal* #445; CCLI # 12224

Step by Step, *The Worship Hymnal* # 480; CCLI #696994

Knowing You (All I Once Held Dear), *The Worship Hymnal* #487; CCLI # 1045238

Wherever He Leads I'll Go, *The Worship Hymnal* # 437; CCLI #25194

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Whatever Jesus Tells You

Focal Text

John 2:1-25

Background Text

John 2

Main Idea

Jesus, God's living Word to us, is superior to all other answers to our deepest needs.

Question to Explore

So why did Jesus turn the water into wine?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to contrast Jesus' superiority in meeting our deepest needs to other attempted solutions.

Gathering together:

Sing: **Yes, Lord, Yes**, *The Worship Hymnal* #445; CCLI # 12224

First thoughts: The title for today's lesson "Whatever Jesus Tells You" is taken from the words of his mother at the wedding in Cana in Galilee. ***His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you"***. This verse does not receive much attention, but it contains much truth for us. We are servants; we need to do whatever Jesus tells us to do. It may be something that would seem to be miraculous; it may be a mundane task. Serving the wine at the wedding feast was both of those things for the servants. The Jewish wedding feast lasted seven to eight days. If these servants had been at work all of that time, they were certainly tired of serving others. But being there after all the wine was served gave them the opportunity to be present when Jesus performed his first miracle or "sign". He made the water into very good wine. When they servants served it to the guests, they must have responded positively. Doing whatever Jesus tells us to do always means we may witness a miracle!

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Whatever Jesus Tells You

Focal Text

John 2:1-25

Background Text

John 2

Main Idea

Jesus, God's Word to us, is superior to all other answers to our deepest needs.

Question to Explore

So why did Jesus turn the water into wine?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to contrast Jesus' superiority in meeting our deepest needs to other attempted solutions.

Introduction to your personal study:

Make a list of the things you sense that God has for you to do this week. As you write down daily repetitive tasks, ask God to direct you as you do those things so that you may see His hand at work in them.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Be sure to read John 1:29-50. These verses focus on John's reference to Jesus as the Lamb of God – an important concept indicating the sacrificial nature of Jesus' coming to

earth as a person. Verses 35-50 record the calling of disciples. The story of the calling of Andrew and Simon indicates that Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist. John the Baptist in verse 36 says when he saw Jesus passing by, "Look, the Lamb of God!" Two of his disciples followed Jesus. One of them was Andrew and he later sought out his brother, Simon, to tell him that they had found the Messiah. The fact that Andrew was a disciple of John is important and the fact that John the Baptist pointed him to Jesus as the Lamb of God is significant. It is also important that Andrew went immediately to tell his brother Peter that Jesus was the Messiah and he brought Peter to Jesus. Other accounts of the calling of Andrew and Peter are found in Matthew 4: 18-20; Mark 1:16-18, and Luke 5: 1-11.

The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist occurred in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan (John 1:28) This Bethany must not be the Bethany which was less than two miles from Jerusalem. That Bethany was not far from the Dead Sea. It was the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus (John 11:1-44). In John 1:43 we are told that Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. From Bethany near Jerusalem to Galilee would have been a trip of 80 miles (128.7 km.)

Bethany on the other side of the Jordan must have been not far from Galilee – about two miles above Jericho. After Jesus called Andrew and Peter as disciples, he decided to leave for Galilee. Soon he called Phillip. ***Phillip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida*** (John 1: 44). Bethsaida was on the northern end of the Sea of Galilee.

Later, Jesus and his disciples went to Cana to a wedding at which his mother was in attendance. Cana was a small town not far from Nazareth. Again, all of these towns were located near or on the shores of the Sea (really a lake) of Galilee. About 13 miles (21 km) long and 8 miles (13 km) wide, it was the principal fishing industry for the region.

Focusing on the Meaning:

John 2: 1-5

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee, Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

The third day probably refers to the time since his conversation with Nathanel. "In the Bible the third day always means 'the day after tomorrow'. So here on the third day means 'two days after' – after the call of Nathanel (1:43) (Hunter, A.M. **The Cambridge**

Bible Commentary of the New English Bible: The Gospel According to John. London: Cambridge University Press, 1965, page 30).

Mary, the mother of Jesus was present at the wedding. “It is not improbable that she was a relative of the family where the marriage took place” (Barnes, A. **Notes on the New Testament.** Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965, page 191). Most families of those close-knit villages were logically kin to people in other nearby villages. This might account for her intervention when the wine was all gone. The guests may have been expected to bring wine to the celebration. If Jesus and his disciples came without bringing wine, his mother may have been gently pointing out the responsibility they had as guests.

The disciples, Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael were with him. “Jesus had not yet called them to be apostles, but they believed that he was the Messiah. The miracle wrought here was doubtless to convince them more fully that he was the Christ” (Barnes, page 191).

The wedding feast among the Jews was commonly observed for seven or eight days. “Weddings were important events in Jewish life, and marriage feasts anticipated the great feast in the coming messianic kingdom. (See Rev. 19:7-9) This occasion was appropriate for Jesus to proclaim, by symbol, the joy he brings” (Steen, J.W. Editor. **A Study Guide to John.** Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board, 1973, pages 21-21).

“The feast, or party, is part of the foundation of Christianity. Here at Cana, Jesus performs His first miracle, so it could be said that our faith, in a sense, began at a party. Early in the history of the church, times of fellowship resembled parties or love feasts. ‘See how much they love one another!’ the unbelievers said as they witnessed the get-togethers of the first followers of Jesus. The quality of their new loves in Christ overflowed in their feasts. How could a group of Christians coming together not resemble a celebration? Even as the Christian faith began at a banquet, so it will come to completion at a wedding feast” (Card, Michael, **The Parable of Joy.** Grand Rapids, Michigan: Discovery House Publishers, 2007, page 42).

Jesus does not refer to Mary as Mother but addressed her as “Dear Woman” in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Some commentators feel that he refers to her as Woman rather than Mother to indicate the change in their relationship from mother/son to Saviour/follower. “Jesus did not show disrespect for his mother but affirmed that he acted independently of human authority” (Steen, page 21). “For ‘woman’ the New English Bible has *mother*, because English has no precise equivalent for the Greek word used. ‘Woman’ is too cold; ‘lady’ too precious; ‘madam’ too formal. *My hour has not yet come* carries a double meaning: (1) It is not time to intervene yet; and (2) It is not yet time for showing my glory” (Hunter, page 31).

Nonetheless Mary feels free to ask for his help. Jesus, however replies that his time for revealing himself has not yet come.

Mary, however, instructs the servants to do as Jesus tells them to do. She obviously felt no reproof in his words.

Michael Card comments on this interchange. "Jesus responds, 'What is that between you and me, my dear?' or perhaps, 'Why should we get involved?'"

I have yet to hear a satisfactory explanation for Jesus' reluctance, but something in the gentle tone of His voice tells Mary that He still intends to do something about the situation. She informs the servants to do whatever He tells them to do" (Card, page 42).

"Mary probably failed to realize adequately that since her Son had left home (some months before) something had happened which must make a difference to their former relationship. He had been anointed with the Holy Spirit and had received power to undertake the special work which his Father had given him to do. Now that, after the long 'silent years' at Nazareth, he had entered on his public ministry, everything (including family ties) must be subordinated to this" (Bruce, F. F. **The Gospel of John**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983, page 69).

The "hour" referred to in verse 4 is also indicated in John 7:30 ***At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because is time had not yet come.*** In Chapter 20, verse 8 we read ***He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.***

Jesus Himself says in Chapter 12: 23 ***The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*** He continues in verse 27 ***Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour, Father, glorify your name!"***

Chapter 13:1 states ***It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.***

Immediately prior to his arrest, Jesus prayed ***"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."***

The time for each of the incidents in the life of Jesus, including his arrest and death, was determined by God, not by the political and religious happenings around him.

John 2: 6-10

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water" so they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” 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 Jewish requirements for which the jars were used included ritual cleansing of the hands through pouring water on them and washing of vessels(cf. Mark 7:3-4) The jars were of stone, since stone vessels did not contract uncleanness. Their large size was natural, but the sequel suggests that the great quantity they contained reflected the fullness of Christ’s grace, in contrast to the limitations of the old covenant (John 1: 16-16) (Beasley-Murray, G.R. **Word Biblical Commentary: John**. Volume 36 (Second Edition), Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000, page 35).

Fred Howard (**Bible Book Commentary: John (Part 1)**, Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, October, November, December, 1986, page 30) states that interpretations of the first sign include the following:

- (1) To the Christian, it symbolizes that Jesus is the source of joy.
- (2) It symbolizes the transformation of Jewish purification water into the new wine of the gospel.
- (3) The wine was symbolic of Jesus’ shed blood.
- (4) It teaches the inadequacy of Jewish purification rites (the old) and the need for a later and better way (the new). Thus the law was inadequate; but the gospel is adequate.
- (5) It symbolizes Christ’s love for the church; thus this sign is a prelude to the entire Gospel.”

“John’s word for miracle is ‘sign’. ‘A wonder with a meaning in it’ is the old definition, and John is always at pains to bring out the ‘meaning’ or spiritual truth. Seven such signs he records in the first twenty chapters; and it will be helpful to set them down here, with their ‘meanings’ attached:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Water into wine (ch. 2) | The difference Christ makes |
| 2. Healing of the officer’s son (ch.4) | Faith the one thing needful. |
| 3. Healing of the cripple (ch. 5) | Christ the restorer of lost powers. |
| 4. Feeding of the multitude (ch. 6) | Christ the bread of life. |
| 5. Walking on the water (ch. 6) | Christ our guide. |
| 6. Healing of man born blind (ch.9) | Christ our light. |
| 7. Raising of Lazarus (ch. 11) | Christ our life. |

Nos. 2, 4, and 5 occur also in the Synoptics” (the other Gospels) (Hunter, pages 29-30).

Palmer lists five teachings from the incident.

1. The unique nature of the ministry of Jesus Christ is clearly asserted. Jesus speaks of *his* hour which is independent of every other relationship and every other hour.
2. The incident shows the authority of Jesus to do signs as Elijah had done them many years before.
3. The sign itself is significant as a sign of transformation; the common water becomes the best wine. What Jesus touches he will transform.
4. Jesus Christ has authority even over the natural order, over the processes of creation.
5. The sign is celebrative and joyous in contrast to the gravity and starkness of John the Baptist. Jesus begins his ministry at Cana by showing his concern for the feelings of a young couple on their wedding day (Palmer, E.F **The Intimate Gospel: Studies in John**. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978, pages 30-31).

John 2: 11

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

We may tentatively define *glory* as ‘the revelation of God’s presence in saving action’. But does not this verse contradict 7:39 ‘Jesus had not yet been glorified’? The explanation is that any act of Jesus, the Word made flesh, manifests his glory, but that a *full* revelation of his glory cannot come till he has completed the work God has given him to do, i.e. until the cross” (Hunter, page 31). In John 12: 23 we read ***Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”***

“What is most striking about the miracle is the fact that no one seems to view it as miraculous. There is no pronouncement from Jesus, no waving of the hands, on the benign request to fill up the jars and take a pitcher over to the master of ceremonies. The subdued tone of the miracle serves to set it in stark contrast to the final wedding feast of the Lamb. (See Rev. 19).

Through this subdued, almost reluctant, demonstration of His power, it is said that Jesus manifested His glory and became the very object of their belief. This value system, which says simple is better than complex, humility is better than ostentation, is characteristic of John's picture of Jesus" (Card, page 43).

"But John clearly states his primary purpose in recording this 'sign', It was the first of many which revealed the glory of Christ. And the disciples, who already believed in Him, had their faith strengthened thereby (v.11)" (Hobbs, H.H. **The Gospel of John: A Study Guide**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965, page 19).

"By means of this sign, the first one of a long series, Christ displayed the glory of his power and of his love. We see the Bridegroom honoring the bond of marriage. Here the Bridegroom does not *receive* gifts. He *bestows* them, and in a most liberal manner. Moreover, he stands revealed as being infinite not only in his love but also in his power; hence, as being, indeed, the Son of God. His disciples began to realize this, and believed in him" (Hendriksen, W. **New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988, page 119).

John 2:12

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

The family may now reside in Capernaum rather than Nazareth. However, two of the disciples, John and James, the sons of Zebedee and Salome lived in Capernaum so the visit may be to their home. Jesus will use Capernaum as his headquarters for the greater part of his Galilean ministry. We assume the brothers are other children of Joseph and Mary. In Mark 6:3 they are named. ***Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon?*** They apparently do not yet understand that Jesus is Messiah for Matthew 12:46, Luke 8:19 and Mark 3:31 indicate that they are outside of the circle of believers. Later, however, James became a believer and a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

They were there until time to go to Jerusalem for the Passover which was celebrated annually on the anniversary of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, The Passover was commemorated at the March-April full moon and was followed immediately by the week-long festival of Unleavened Bread. Every male among the Jews was required to appear at this feast. Jesus, in obedience to the law, went up to observe it. This is the first Passover which he attended after he entered on the work of the ministry.

John 2: 13-17

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove

all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Psalm 69:9: ***for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.*** This refers to "extraordinary concern for the temple of God; intense solicitude that the worship there should be pure, and such as God would approve" (Barnes, page 196).

The outer court or the Court of the Gentiles was the place which was available for non-Jews to worship. If this place was used for trading, it could not be used for worship. The money-changers did perform a convenient service for visitors to the temple, who might bring all sorts of coinage with them and require to have it exchanged for something more acceptable. "Most people took the opportunity of a visit to the temple at this season to pay the annual half-shekel, contributed by Jewish men of twenty and over throughout the world for the maintenance of the temple. The only coinage acceptable for this purpose was Tyrian (because of the exceptional purity of its silver content)" (Bruce, page 74).

"What Jesus did is best classified as an act of prophetic symbolism. If he had Zech. 14:21 (***There shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day***) in his mind when he protested against his Father's house (cf. Luke 2:49) being turned into a supermarket, we may recall that the preceding verses of Zech. 14 tell how all nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship. The only place within the temple precincts which was open to people of 'all nations' (apart from the Israelites) was the outer court (sometimes called the 'court of the Gentiles'); if this area were taken up for trading it could not be used for worship. Jesus' actions reinforced his spoken protest" (Bruce, page 75). Jesus acted to help emphasize that God intends for every person in the world to have the privilege of worshipping Him.

It was convenient as well for worshippers to buy oxen, sheep, and pigeons for the sacrifices to be offered in the Temple. It takes little imagination to visualize what the presence of oxen, sheep, and pigeons would do to the cleanliness and worshipfulness of an area—even a large area like the Court of the Gentiles.

These merchants had lost the sense of the holiness of the entire Temple area. They were doing business. The disciples remembered the Scripture ***Zeal for your house will consume me*** either on this occasion or later after the resurrection as they reflected on the place this incident had in the eventual death of Jesus.

This cleansing of the temple occurred at the beginning of his ministry according to John's account. Yet in three years the same scene is repeated as recorded in Matthew 11:12. Not all commentators agree that this a different and earlier event than the

cleansing of the Temple as recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Beasley-Murray states “There is reasonably wide-spread agreement now that: (i) the event happened only once, not twice (at the beginning and end of the ministry of Jesus), (ii) it took place in the last week of the life of Jesus; (iii) the Fourth Evangelist had no intention of correcting the timing of the event, but set his account at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus to highlight its significance for understanding the course of the ministry. It provides a vital clue for grasping the nature and the course of our Lord’s work, his words and actions, his death and resurrection, and the outcome of it all in a new worship of God, born out of a new relation to God in and through the crucified-risen Christ” (Beasley-Murray, pages 38-39).

Remember that the purpose of the Gospel writers is not the historical recording of events, but the telling of the meaning of Jesus’ acts.

We do know that people easily forget the most solemn reproofs and return to evil practices and no sacredness of time or place will guard men from sin especially when financial gain is involved.

John 2: 18-22

Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove our authority to do all this?”

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Jesus was acting like a prophet, “He was reforming, by his authority, the temple. It was natural to ask by what authority this was done; and as they had been accustomed to miracles in the life of Moses, and Elijah, and the other prophets, so they demanded evidence that *he* had authority to cleanse the house of God (Barnes, page 197).

Jesus’ acts in the temple were not simply correcting the distortions that were occurring, but Jesus was challenging the system of temple worship itself.

Jesus speaks of his body (verse 21) when he says ***Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*** This statement of his future means nothing to the Jewish leaders, but will later be very significant to his disciples. Early in his ministry Jesus is already preparing his disciples for what is to come.

Apparently the money-changers and sellers yielded to the authority of Jesus. Barnes indicates that their own consciences reproved them. They were, after all, Jews who

knew the significance and importance of the Temple to worship. They may also have recognized Jesus as a prophet and the prophet had an important place in Jewish history. Perhaps the reputation of Jesus was already strong enough that some felt he was indeed the Messiah. “Jesus on all occasions had a most wonderful control over men. None could resist him. There was something about his *manner*, as well as his doctrine, that awed men and made them tremble at his presence. Comp. Jn. 18: 5,6.

On this occasion he had the *manner* of a prophet, the authority of God, and the testimony of their own consciences, and they could not, therefore, resist the authority by which he spoke (Barnes, page 196).

The Jewish leaders did not punish Jesus at this time. After all, they were the ones responsible for the worship at the Temple. They had fallen so far short of maintaining the dignity and appropriate care of the Temple that they could scarcely encourage the commerce which was going on. They did not, apparently, do anything to keep it from resuming.

This trip to Jerusalem with this action and others not recorded led many to believe in him. In verses 23-25 we read ***Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man’s testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.***

People were impressed with the miracles and signs Jesus was performing. Their belief however, was for the most part, a superficial one and Jesus was not relying on their support to give credence to his ministry.

The two incidents in the text are connected. “The temple-cleansing, in its own way, like the changing of the water into wine in another way, is a sign of the impending supersession of the old order by the new” (Bruce, page 77). Both of them contrast the sufficiency and superiority of Jesus to the failure and inadequacy of Jewish rites and of the most sacred site of Judaism, the temple. Both incidents indicate God’s unique presence in Jesus.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Lead the group to an understanding of the answer to the question “So why did Jesus turn the water into wine?” The gift of wine instead of water was crucially important for the earliest readers of this Gospel. They must grasp the superiority of the Son of God and his gift as compared to the old covenant.

This was the first of the signs of Jesus; its function was a revelation of the glory of Jesus and the strengthening of the faith of his disciples.

Lead the church to contrast Jesus' superiority in meeting our deepest needs to other attempted solutions.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Whatever Jesus Tells You

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.

Focal Text

John 2:1-25

Background Text

John 2

Main Idea

Jesus, God's Word to us, is superior to all other answers to our deepest needs.

Question to Explore

So why did Jesus turn the water into wine?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to contrast Jesus' superiority in meeting our deepest needs to other attempted solutions.

Connect with Life:

Open the Bible discussion with this: Does anyone remember words from the hymn **Wherever He Leads I'll Go?** (*The Worship Hymnal* # 437; CCLI #25194). If so, What occasions have been meaningful to you when this was sung? The hymn reflects the words of Mary, the mother of Jesus who said to the servants at the wedding feast "Do whatever he tells you".

Emphasize this as a important teaching of today's lesson.

Guide the Study:

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Summarize the Teacher Preparation material about the calling of the disciples

Have someone read John 1: 1-5.

Describe the wedding feast (celebration) among the Jews. (Lasted 7-8 days; an important event in Jewish life; guests probably contributed food and wine as well as bringing gifts).

Say: The wedding took place in a town named Cana near the Lake of Galilee. Like any place today where you have a number of small towns located near each other and with common interests and industries, you will find many families related to those in the other towns. This may have been true with Mary and/or Joseph's families. It is possible that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was aiding in the celebration because of her relationship to the hosts. Perhaps that is why she told Jesus that they were out of wine.

Question: What was Jesus' response to Mary's letting him know there was no more wine. (He asks why he should be involved).

Emphasize that Jesus may have been pointing out that his relationship to Mary is not just as mother/son but Saviour/follower.

Share: Now let's consider the meaning of the words spoken by Jesus: ***My time has not yet come.***

Have various people read the following verses:

John 7: 6-8; 30 ***Therefore Jesus told them, "The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come.***

At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.

John 8:20 ***He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.***

John 12: 23 ***"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.***

John 12: 27 ***"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour, Father, glorify your name!"***

John 13:1 states ***It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.***

John 17:1 Jesus prayed ***“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”***

State: The time for each of the incidents in the life of Jesus, including his arrest and death, was determined by God not by the political and religious happenings around him. Jesus speaks of *his* hour which is independent of every other relationship and every other hour.

Ask: How does Mary react to Jesus’ words? (She simply says to the servants “Do whatever he tells you.”) Allow time for discussion of the meaning of these words.

Have someone read John 2: 6-10.

Explain: The stone jars were used for *ritual* cleansing of the hands through pouring water on them and for the washing of vessels. These jars would not be used for routine household cleaning. To maintain the purity of the water they held, water would be dipped from the large storage urns (stone jars) into smaller bowls or pans and then the jars recovered with lids or cloths.

Have the following points written on a white board or make copies for each participant from the material given at the end of the worship time. Discuss each point.

The meaning of the sign or miracle of the water into wine:

- (1) To the Christian, it symbolizes that Jesus is the source of joy.
- (2) It symbolizes the transformation of Jewish purification water into the new wine of the gospel.
- (3) The wine was symbolic of Jesus’ shed blood.
- (4) It teaches the inadequacy of Jewish purification rites (the old) and the need for a later and better way (the new). Thus the law was inadequate; but the gospel is adequate.
- (5) It symbolizes Christ’s love for the church; thus this sign is a prelude to the entire Gospel.” Fred Howard (**Bible Book Commentary: John (Part 1)**), Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, October, November, December, 1986, page 30).

Have someone read John 2:11.

State: The miracle was very undramatic. We do not know who was aware of the miracle. Yet in it Jesus revealed his glory. One definition of glory is “the revelation of God’s presence in saving action”. It was an important sign to the disciples and they began the process of putting their faith in him and understanding his mission. The full revelation of God’s glory will be on the cross.

Ask: How would you have reacted if you had been one of the disciples present at the wedding in Cana?

Then ask: What importance is there in the fact of Jesus’ presence at a wedding feast and the first sign taking place there? (We may understand his presence there as honoring to marriage).

Have someone read John 2:12.

State: This is an interlude between the wedding feast and the second important happening we will examine in this lesson. Jesus spends time with his disciples, his mother and his brothers. Although we are beginning to see the glory of Jesus manifested, we also see his life as a man – a human being.

Explain that all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem for the Passover feast.

Have someone read John 2: 13-17.

Ask for a description of what was happening in the temple courts.

Tell the group: A market for buying and selling live animals and birds for the ritual of religious-based sacrifices existed for Temple use. The market was taking place in the Court of the Gentiles which was the only place the non-Jewish believer in Jehovah God was allowed to worship.

Have someone read Psalm 69:9.

Ask: How did Jesus react to the abuse of the Temple?

Describe why the abuse had come about: People needed to purchase animals for the sacrifice; they also needed money in an acceptable common currency to give for their temple maintenance offering.

Encourage a brief discussion: What are ways we allow convenience or financial advantage interfere with that which is holy? (Consider the multi-million dollar industry created by the proliferation of religious themed merchandise available in Christian book stores or the buying and selling of music, books, and other items at religious concerts and events—do not make a judgement, but allow for discussion).

Discuss the fact that the other three gospels place the cleansing of the temple at the end of Jesus' ministry.

Confirm: Commentators are not in accord on whether this is a separate event or placed in a different time sequence. Remember that the Gospel writers are not historical writers, but are telling the story of Jesus and helping us understand its meaning.

Have someone read John 2: 18-22.

State: Jesus was acting like a prophet. What did the religious leaders want of him?

Ask: Did Jesus answer as they expected? (No, he referred to his own death and resurrection. This statement meant nothing to the Jewish leaders, but would later be very significant to his disciples).

Discuss why the money-changer and sellers yielded to the authority of Jesus and why the Jewish leaders did not overrule His authority. Use the following from the preparation materials for your discussion.

Barnes indicates that their own consciences reproved them. They were, after all, Jews who knew the significance and importance of the Temple to worship. They may also have recognized Jesus as a prophet and the prophet had an important place in Jewish history. Perhaps the reputation of Jesus was already strong enough that some felt he was indeed the Messiah. "Jesus on all occasions had a most wonderful control over men. None could resist him. There was something about his *manner*, as well as his doctrine, that awed men and made them tremble at his presence. Comp. Jn. 18: 5,6. On this occasion he had the *manner* of a prophet, the authority of God, and the testimony of their own consciences, and they could not, therefore, resist the authority by which he spoke (Barnes, page 196).

Have someone read John 2: 23-25.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Conclude with this: Much of the teaching of these two events in the life of Jesus had as its purpose the strengthening of the disciples. We are disciples and we need strengthening. Many believers this week will face persecution. Others will face discouragement. Some will be tired of doing good. Let us draw encouragement from

what Jesus did at the wedding and in the cleansing of the temple to demonstrate his power over nature and over men and establishments of the day.

Have someone lead in prayer to close the Bible study.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Whatever Jesus Tells You John 2:1-25

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Just Do It!

The lesson today began with Mary's words to the servants at the wedding. She told them "**Do whatever he tells you.**" Can you understand that this would be what Mary would say to you if she were in the room today.

What will Jesus tell you to do this week?

Study hard; play fair at sports; be kind to the new kid at school; don't nag your brother; clean your room; fix dinner and give your mother a break; be honest; watch how you and your girlfriend or boyfriend act when you are alone; stay away from drugs and smoking; call your grandparents; write a thank you note for the birthday gift you received; tell your parents thanks for all they do for you; be respectful of your teachers; mow the lawn like Dad asked you to do.

Are these little things or are they the big things that make up living a Godly life – one faithful task at a time.

3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Whatever Jesus Tells You John 2:1-25

Beginning the Service:

Sing:

Step by Step, *The Worship Hymnal* # 480; CCLI #696994

Knowing You (All I Once Held Dear), *The Worship Hymnal* #487; CCLI # 1045238

Offering:

Praying for the World:

Riverdance, flaming red hair, a twinkle in the eye and a song on their lips...No other people group captures the imagination like the Gaeilgeori. Also known as Irish speakers, they are the people around the world who still speak Irish Gaelic as their first, or heart, language. Despite a long, vibrant, and rich history of Christianity, there is currently no evangelical church (of any denomination) among the Gaeligeori. Catholicism struggles to be meaningful to the people for who it may be only a part of their culture. If you look behind the romantic surface, you would see many people who are in spiritual darkness and need to hear the Good News of God's love.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Whatever Jesus Tells You

In John 12: 23 we read **Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”**

In this passage Jesus is referring to his own death, burial, and resurrection. For all the years since the time of Jesus’ death we have wondered why it was necessary for the very God of the universe to die such a brutal death. But he told us why with the analogy of a plant being buried in the ground resulting in more plants, more fruit—great abundance.

Jesus lost his life so that many would come to salvation through a living relationship with a living Saviour. His ministry had demonstrated the inadequacy of the Jewish system of belief as it was being experienced in his lifetime. The good, abundant wine which came out of the stone jars used for the ritual hand washing of the Jews symbolized the new abundant life in Christ. The cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem was necessary because so many Jews – never all Jews – but so many Jews had forgotten the holiness of worship. It had become something to be done - especially at Passover – and needed to be accomplished as quickly and efficiently as possible. If animals were available and money exchanged in the temple court, it made the task easier.

Earlier in the book of John we read Mary’s words to the servants at the wedding feast. **His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”** Those words of Mary apply to us today. **“Do whatever he tells you.”**

Later in the book of John, Jesus Himself tells us **“The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”**

A group of Christian women who were holding a Bible study in a country where that is forbidden were in jail for many weeks. There were over 100 women in one room. Some were ill. Of course, they were frightened. They did not know what tomorrow would hold for them. Their leader was in contact with a friend in North America by cell phone. What a strange world exists today. They are jailed in incredibly primitive conditions, but are allowed to use their cell phones. They were told they would be sent to their countries of origin. They did not have their passports. Days passed and they continued to be imprisoned. Friends prayed for their deliverance from prison and for a safe return to their homes and for work for them when they arrived. All but the group leader were eventually deported.

One friend tells of the bright spirit of the leader of this group. She had shared a Bible study time with her for many weeks and was always learning from her. She shared from Psalm 18: 29 ***With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.*** She demonstrated the truth of this verse by running across the room and taking a leap in the air. This Christian sister knows only too well the difficulty of this life in the world and the beauty of the hope for eternal life. She may yet actually lose her life here, but it will be kept for eternity. She told her friend in North America “God is with her and her heart is good. God has a plan. God knows my heart. For God, it is easy.”

We like the ease of our lives; we want to be Christians, but we really don't want to sacrifice for that to happen. But Jesus said ***“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”***

Call to Commitment:

For increasing numbers of Christians in today's world that following and serving involves persecution and death. Jesus, after all, did die on the cross. ***“Where I am my servant also will be,”*** Jesus said. For some early believers that actually met death on a cross. It meant death as Christians were killed by lions as entertainment for people in the Roman Coliseum. For many believers throughout the centuries it has meant death because they stayed true to their convictions.

For many of us as Christians, it simply means doing whatever Jesus tells us to do. That may involve faithful prayer, true stewardship of time, money, and resources; absolute integrity in business dealings; commitment to spouse and family. These demands on us are not life-threatening, but they are demanding of our best. What a wonderful promise is contained in the words of Jesus, ***“My Father will honor the one who serves me.”***

May our lives this week be worthy of the honor which the Father will give to those who serve Jesus.

Sing **Wherever He Leads I'll Go**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 437; CCLI #25194

Concluding the Service:

Choose someone to read 2 Corinthians 13:14 to conclude the worship experience.

For use in the Bible Study Time

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