



Sunday, March 8, 2009: The Beginning of Miracles

Scripture: John 2:1-11

Sermon Notes:

1. In the book of John, Jesus' teaching focuses on new creation or new birth. The book contains seven 'signs' or miracles which are meant to help us understand what our redemption in Christ means for the new creation.
2. The signs that Jesus performed never compel belief, but rather illustrate spiritual realities for believers: for those granted spiritual sight, the signs or miracles of Jesus serve to confirm and establish their faith.
3. The first sign takes place at the wedding in Cana. This demonstrates the importance of marriage biblically and in Jewish society. Marriage was so highly respected that, as one commentator writes, Christ not only honoured a wedding feast with His presence but also adorned it with His first miracle. In Jewish society, to honour marriage was to honour God.
4. Mary's knowledge of the shortage of wine and her authority over the servants would indicate that the bridegroom was a relative of Jesus. Her words to Jesus, "They have no wine," clearly suggest that she was expecting Him to intervene supernaturally on the bridegroom's behalf. Jesus' respectful rebuff shows that He is in the service of His Father, and Mary's response and words to the servants demonstrate her faith in Jesus' Messiahship.
5. According to the scriptures, wine is a gift from God, and a picture of the joy of the kingdom. This miracle reminds us that Christ is the true vine, and in Him is found the superabundance of true life and the joy of the kingdom of God. The wine of the kingdom, which will come at the last, is the best.
6. The water pots which were used for purification are significant in that they remind us how Christ's blood (pictured by the wine) is our source of purification.
7. In Christ our lives are revealed to be lives of joy. God is really interested not just in our barest needs, but in our joys. We do not serve a miserly God. As the hymn writer John Newton expressed, "Thou art coming to a King; / Large petitions with thee bring; / For His grace and power are such, / None can ever ask too much."

Application Questions:

1. What does the context of Jesus' first miracle (i.e. a wedding) say about the importance of marriage?
2. Why is accepting Jesus' miracles as historical events necessary if we are to consistently believe in the sovereign rule of God in the world? How does the spiritualization of the gospel lead to the privatization of religion?
3. What does Jesus mean, or to what is He referring when He says to Mary, "My hour has not yet come"?
4. What does the abundance of the good wine which Jesus created through a miracle tell us about the character of God and His attitude toward our joy?
5. In light of this miracle and what it signifies, how can we respond to people who claim that the life of a Christian is dull and restrictive?
6. In my own personal life, are there areas where I am not asking and trusting God to make up my lack with His abundance? Is there joy lacking in my life?