
Celebrations Turn Water into Wine!

(from [Sam Candler's sermon of 16 January 2022](#). Enjoy!)

They were invited to a wedding! What in the world were Jesus and his disciples doing, being invited to a wedding! And what in the world were they thinking, when they actually attended the wedding!

According to the second chapter of the Gospel of John, the new group had just gotten together. Jesus was gathering a team. These new disciples had left other teams to join Jesus! Apparently, some of them had been on John the Baptist's team first.

Something about Jesus had caused them to leave what they had, and to join up. Maybe they heard the world-changing words of Jesus. Some were looking for a messiah. Some were looking for the lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. Some were looking for the one on whom the Spirit would descend. Some were looking for a great rabbi. Some were looking for the fulfillment of Moses and the prophets. (All these titles are mentioned by John the gospel writer, right before today's story of the wedding.)

And, apparently, they had found what they were looking for. Their lives were being changed, and they were on their way as new disciples of Jesus.

And, then, one day, there was a wedding in Cana. How nice. In the midst of Roman occupation, in the midst of travails and struggles, someone decides to go ahead with a wedding.

Maybe it was a bit like our own times, today. In the midst of pandemic protocols, in the midst of social malaise and cultural anxiety, in the midst of people being sick, someone decides to go ahead and get married.

I have heard, these days, that some people are postponing weddings, postponing having children, postponing celebrations. "Let's wait," they say. "Let's wait for a more opportune time. Our time has not yet come." I understand those cautions. Maybe it is not yet the time to celebrate.

Fortunately, someone in Cana did not wait until an opportune time. Maybe it was the groom's family, or even the bride's family. Or the couple. Whomever. The time was now. Let's have the wedding. Even if times are tough, let's have the wedding. Let's invite people. Let's invite old Mary of Nazareth. Maybe her husband, too, what is his name?

Hey, let's invite that new young preacher, Jesus, too, the one who just came in from the Jordan River. He was just baptized out there by John the Baptizer; and this guy, Jesus, is assembling a new team, a new following of disciples. Let's invite him and all his new friends to the wedding, too.

The Bible does not say all this, of course. But it does say, curiously, Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding. I do not know why in the world Jesus, and his disciples, too, were invited to a wedding. But I find it very curious that they decided to accept the invitation and to attend. Weren't they supposed to be out getting their act together? Weren't they supposed to be out praying and studying scripture and healing? How in the world did they have time to attend a wedding?

But so they did. ... The Gospel of John organizes itself around seven "signs," and the first one – the very first one—occurs at a wedding. The first sign of Jesus is at a celebration!

...Yes, Jesus is present in tragedy, and Jesus will always be present in tragedy. But, according to Saint John, Jesus performed his first sign, his first miracle, at a wedding – even if he considered, maybe for a moment, that he had nothing to do with it, nothing to do with celebrating.

Friends, do not ever be reluctant to celebrate. Do not be afraid to offer joy. Do not be embarrassed or sheepish about having to turn water into wine. According to Saint John, it was at a wedding, at a time of celebration, when the wine had run out, that was the first place in which Jesus revealed his glory. Celebrations turn water into wine! If you need to make something out of nothing, if you have some water that needs to be turned into wine in your life, find something to celebrate! Celebrations turn water into wine!

[\(Read all of Sam Candler's January 16, 2022, sermon here!\)](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip