**WITH JESUS** (Week 3, January 24, 2018)

**Getting to Know Jesus Through the Gospel of John**

**John 2:1-17**

**Background**

1. “My time has not yet come.” (2:4) The “time” to which Jesus refered was the time of His glorification, when He would be given a glorified body and returned to His rightful place of honor with God the Father. This glorification would include His death and resurrection, which would fulfill His mission and purpose.

2. The miracles and signs that Jesus performed served as confirmation of His identity, as Messiah and Son of God. Transforming the water into wine demonstrated Jesus’ incredible power. This glimpse of His Divine nature was enough to convince the first of His disciples of His identity, though their faith would fade at times during His ministry. This miracle is the first of 35 recorded signs and miracles recorded in the gospels, but John told us that there were many more that did not need to be recorded. (John 20:30-31)

3. This miracle is recorded only in the gospel of John. Perhaps this is due to the private nature of this event. Of all the guests/participants, only Mary and the servants knew, or perhaps because of its’ unique qualities. This miracle doesn’t relieve suffering or save those in danger, but rather prevents a rather severe case of social embarrassment.

4. Cana was about 9 miles from Nazareth, and would have been easy to reach for Jesus and His first disciples. Jesus, His first followers, and Mary were all invited guests, so it’s possible that the wedding involved distant family or family friends.

5. In first century Jewish culture, a wedding celebration could last as long as a week. Guests could count on a nearly limitless feast and celebration for multiple days, full of food, wine, music, dancing, and fun. Some guests would only stay for a day or two, but it was expected that the hosts would provide enough food, wine, and fun for as long as guests showed up and stayed to celebrate.

6. To run out of essential wedding supplies like wine would have been a massive social embarrassment, that would have marked the family and the event for years. It would have broken the unwritten law of hospitality and reflected badly on all involved.

7. Mary’s direction to the servants to “do whatever He tells you,” (2:5) demonstrated her trust in Jesus and her respect for His authority and resourcefulness. Despite the initial response of Jesus, Mary knew and understood His compassionate heart, His willingness to help others, and perhaps even the potential power that He had available to Him.

8. The servants obeyed. They willingly did what they were directed to do. Jesus did not need to wait until the water jars were full to transform the water into wine, nor did He need the servants to draw out the wine. He chose to work through their efforts. God frequently works through human efforts to work His grace and goodness. God honors us with significant roles in His work. We are not “needed,” but He chooses to channel His power through us.

9. All of the miracles and signs done by Jesus alleviated suffering, protected or saved from danger, or helped a great deal, but they also served a much greater purpose; to reveal His glory. The miracles demonstrated Jesus’ great love for all people, but they also revealed the unique Divine nature of the Son of God. Each miracle and sign was a partial unveiling of His true identity and a glimpse of His glory.

10. The Jews considered the temple in Jerusalem to be God’s house. Like all faithful Jews, Jesus would have visited the temple many times to worship God. He was quite familiar with the temple complex. But this visit would be different, as Jesus wanted to make it clear that Messiah was on the scene.

11. The Glory of God, The Divine “God With Us” presence of the Holy One, was no longer contained within a building, but was in Jesus fully. Though veiled, Jesus was fully Divine, and in Messiah, glimpses of God’s glory were evident.

12. Faithful Jews were instructed to bring a sacrificial animal from their own homes, (Deut. 12:5-7) which made the sacrifice much more personal and significant. But by the first century, this proved to be impractical, as Jews traveled to the temple from great distances and in large numbers, especially during the Passover. The temple priests had given permission to merchants and money-changers to set up near the temple for convenience. By the first century, the commerce had moved into the temple courts and to the very doors of the temple. Business was booming, and the temple was well-supported by the percentages paid by those who wanted to secure the best and closest locations.

13. Jesus’ response to the commercial desecration of the temple was deliberate and forceful. He was strong, direct, decisive, and intent on a thorough cleansing of the temple by His own hands. (Mal. 3:1-3) Jesus was clearly angry, but expressed this “righteous anger” without sinning. He directly confronted those who did wrong, took intentional steps to end the wrong-doing, and expressed His anger through controlled action. The use of force was necessary, but Jesus stayed completely in control and did not sin in His anger. (Eph. 4:26-27)

14. According to the other gospels, Jesus visited the temple and cleansed it just before His last Passover. (Mt. 21 12:17, Mk. 11:15-19, Lk. 19:45-46) Some scholars have speculated that this is the same episode as reported in John 2, but many believe that there were two separate incidents several years apart.

**Review Questions**

 15. (2:1-2) What’s important to know about a Jewish wedding celebration? Where was it being held? Who attended?

16. (2:3-5) What happened? Why is the wine supply running out a problem? (Beyond there’s no more wine?!) Why does Mary tell Jesus about the problem? What’s contained in His surprisingly strong response? How does Mary respond to Jesus’ words?

17. (2:6-8) What’s significant about the jars? What did Jesus tell the servants to do and why? How did the servants respond? Why did Jesus even need the servants help?

18. (2:9-10) What happened when the Master of Ceremonies tasted the wine? Who did he call over to talk? What was the end result? How did the story end?

19. (2:11-12) What does it mean that Jesus “revealed His glory?” How did the disciples respond? Where did they go next? Why?

20. (2:13) What’s significant about the Passover celebration? Why did Jesus travel to Jerusalem? What did He find at the temple? Why had this situation developed, and what’s wrong with it?

21. (2:15-16) How did Jesus respond? What did He do immediately? Why is this surprising and startling? What motivated Him? What did He do and what did He say?

22. (2:17) How did His disciples respond? What came to their minds? (Ps. 69:9, Mal. 3)

**So What?**

23. What motivated Jesus to turn the water into wine? How do these character traits encourage you to share all of your circumstances and situations with Jesus?

24. Why did Jesus direct the servants to fill the huge jars, dip a sample out, and take it to the master of ceremonies? Why the low key approach and why use the servants to help? How do the actions of Jesus comfort and encourage you to trust and obey Him?

25. What motivated Jesus to cleanse the temple courts? How do you respond to these character traits of Jesus? How can these traits encourage and help you to trust Him more?