

GOING PUBLIC

WILLIS 11/27/11

Jn 2:1-11

This being the week of Thanksgiving I sensed it good to return to our theme of Overflow that started this year out. It's not that we ever left it but today I want to place a more specific emphasis on it.

- The context of our text this morning is a wedding. After 400 silent years followed by 30 mostly private years Jesus chooses to go public. **In the context of love and celebration He ends 400 years of silence and 30 years of being mostly private.**

In the great love chapter of 1 Cor 13 the Apostle Paul speaks of those 3 all consuming truths. In v.13 he says' "Now these 3 things remain faith, hope and love, the greatest of these is love."

- **One of the most effective prayers we could ever pray is the simple yet profound request, "Jesus, reduce me to love."**
- It seems like it is a lot easier to judge than it is to love. Only problem is judgment doesn't have the power to bring change. Love is the promise that never fails.
- To be reduced to love is to be exalted to greatness, for love is the greatest of the 3 eternal. Where love is freely expressed there will also be an effectual faith and an invigorating hope.

For the past year we have been addressing this theme of Overflow. Today we want to look at overflow in relationship to the 3 eternal that remain; we want to look at overflow in relationship to faith, love and the hope they bring.

- **Faith of is the doorway through which the overflow of God goes public. Hope is the manner in which overflow gets heard. Love is the means by which overflow is received.**

Jn 2:1-11

I've entitled what I want to share with us today, "Going Public." Jn 2 is the first mention of the overflow of God being manifest through the ministry of Jesus. No doubt the overflow of His glory was revealed at His birth and all the events that followed.

- But Jn2 is the first account of the overflow of God being released through the ministry of Christ. In Jn 2 the overflow of God goes public.
- **Miracles are simply the overflow of God going public to meet the need of man.**

Often I have wondered, why a wedding for His first miracle and why wine? Raising Lazarus from the dead was a pretty amazing miracle; why not use that as your start?

- I like what Tony Compolo says about this question. He says, “Jesus chose a wedding in need of wine because His miracles were not as much about power as they were about love.”
- **Love was to be the primary context through which Jesus chose to go public. So He chose a wedding as His inaugural context not a war.**
- Heavens initial invasion come at a wedding which is the consummate picture of love and it had to do with wine which was the consummate symbol of joy.

And a whole lot of joy I might add. Six water pots the scriptures say, each of which held 20-30 gallons. Toward the end of the celebration Jesus brings in 120-180 gallons of wine, and this was not 2 Buck Chuck, it was vintage, private reserve, the best of the best.

- **This was a miracle that spoke of quality and quantity revealing that the God we serve is a God of liberality, generosity and great extravagance.**
- Heavens invasion of earth is an extravagant invasion. When the overflow of God goes public it is a liberal offering of God’s generosity. The fact it was done at a wedding shows God’s desire to be generous in a very personal and intimate way.

It struck me odd that in all my study of Jn 2, no one made mention of the seemingly critical role of the servants in seeing the overflow of God made manifest. Everybody made mention of Jesus, Mary was often referred to as was the head waiter and groom.

- **Apparently no one seemed to think the faith of the servants played a significant role in the manifesting of God’s glory.**
- At least if they did no one seemed to think it was important enough to bring it into the conversation. But think of the faith they had to have to cooperate with Jesus.

I have often wondered what the biggest miracle was that day in Cana. Was it Jesus turning the water into wine or was it the willingness of the servants to draw water out of the pots and present it to the head waiter as wine?

- V.9 says, “The servants who had drawn the water out knew...” They knew it was water but **Jesus made a demand on their faith to present it to the head waiter as if it were wine.**
- Here we see the faithfulness of God to prepare us for the coming demands on our faith. Knowing their faith was about to be required, Father prompts Mary to say to the servants, “Whatever he says to you do it.”
- **The overflow of Jesus usually requires the faith of man.** So the faithfulness of God will always prompt the expectation of man. The prompting of God is meant to position us in faith so we have the courage to obey the overflow.
- How many of us would have said, “I can’t go to the waiter and tell him its wine...”

When did the water turn to wine? V.9 says, “When the waiter tasted the water which had turned to wine...” but the scriptures never say when the water turned to wine. I think they are purposely vague for our encouragement.

- V.7 “Fill the water pots with water.” V.8 “Draw some out and take it to the head waiter.” Take it to the head waiter and they took it. Would that be take water to the head waiter or take wine to the head waiter?
- It was water when the servants drew it out but it was wine by the time the waiter tasted it. When did the water become wine?
- **I think the water became wine the moment the servants were willing to obey the command of Jesus to go.** They drew out water and then their faith to go was the trigger that released heavens overflow to go public.
- Which means the faith of man is critical in manifesting the overflow of God. **God’s overflow goes public any time man’s faith goes public.**

The manifestation of God’s overflow begins at any point we are willing to do what He requires, regardless of what we have previously seen. Yes we draw out water but if we are willing to join in on the miracle, we will see that water as wine.

- Yes, we heard the report of defeat but if we are willing to go with the better report of victory, we will see that loss turn to gain.

It is amazing to think Christ’s first miracle could have failed if the servants would have shrunk back in fear. But in spite of their status, without consideration of their imperfections, they believed and did whatever Jesus required of them to do.

It is important to note the water was poured into 6 stone pots. Commentators tell us 6 is the number of imperfection. It was through the imperfection of stone pots that Jesus performed His first miracle.

- Here we see the truth of what Paul spoke of when he said, “We have this treasure in pots of clay.” 2 Cor 4:7
- The grace of God is such that the overflow of God always flows through the imperfections of man.
- **Through the imperfections of man God releases His greatest work. Imperfections don’t hinder the overflow of God; they set the stage for it.**
- These 6 pots of imperfection were not containers of God’s glory they were facilitators. In the same way as we lean into the desire of God, giving our faith to His command to go... we facilitate the overflow of God’s glory.
- **God’s glory invades earth when man yields to Christ’s command to go.**

2011 has been about the Overflow of God going public. It is time to lean into His desire and let His glory flow through the doorway of our faith.