

Do It!

Good evening. In the Old and New Testament worlds, weddings were happy, festive occasions just as they are today. The marriage ceremony was considerably longer, during which time there was feasting and celebration. Two passages in the Bible shed light on what may have taken place at this celebration in this second chapter of John. The first is the marriage of Jacob and Leah in Genesis chapter 29. Actually, Jacob thought he was marrying Rachel, the younger sister for whom he had labored seven years. Laban outdoes Jacob in deceit by switching brides. A lengthy celebration, a good quantity of wine, and a very dark tent seem to explain how Jacob could spend the night consummating his marriage with Leah rather than Rachel.

According to the Mishnah, the Jewish wedding would take place on a Wednesday if the bride was a virgin and on a Thursday if she was a widow (*Ket.* 1:1). The bridegroom and his friends made their way in procession to the bride's house. This was often done at night, when there could be a spectacular torchlight procession. There were doubtless speeches and expressions of goodwill before the bride and groom went in procession to the groom's house, where the wedding banquet was held. It is probable that there was a religious ceremony, but we have no details. The processions and the feast are the principal items of which we have knowledge. The feast was prolonged, and might last as long as a week.

If you have your Bibles with you, and if it is convenient, please open them and follow along while we read from John 2:1-11 [RSV] regarding the events surrounding a wedding in which Jesus attended.

1. On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2. Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with His disciples. 3. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." 4. And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.**" 5. His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." 6. Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7. Jesus said to them, "**Fill the jars with water.**" And they filled them up to the brim. 8. He said to them, "**Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast.**" So they took it. 9. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom 10. and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now."**

11. This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

In John 2:1-11, we have the first recorded miracle performed by Jesus whereby He transformed 120 gallons of water into wine. One gets the impression that the couple being married is either friends or possibly related to Mary, and that she is helping with the arrangements, especially the serving of the food and wine. She seems to be one of the first to know that the wine is running out. Although she seems to be more than just a guest at this wedding, Mary still showed great concern and empathy for the host of the wedding feast and the plight he was facing when he discovered that his supply of wine for his guests was depleted. She knew that her Son, Jesus, could alleviate the situation. Apparently, she was a woman of great influence, and at Mary's urging, Jesus rectified the state of affairs, and saved the host from a very embarrassing position in which he found himself. When the host of the wedding was about to run out of wine, Jesus told the servants to fill the water pots with water. They did as they were told, and out came new wine.

Although this story in the life of Christ occurred some 2,000 years ago, it has very serious implications for all people today.

What connection is there between filling stone pots with water and the production of wine? Was the source of this wine simply grapes?

Let us now turn in our Bibles to the Old Testament *Book of Joshua*, and follow along while we read from Joshua 6:1-5 [RSV]. After reading these first five verses, we will then drop down and conclude by reading verse 20.

1. Now Jericho was shut up from within and from without because of the people of Israel; none went out, and none came in. 2. And the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given into your hand Jericho, with its king and mighty men of valor. 3. You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. 4. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; and on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. 5. And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him."

20. So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

When Joshua and the Israelites marched around Jericho thirteen times in seven days at the command of God, what did marching around the city have to do with the subsequent falling down of the walls of the city on the seventh day?

Absolutely nothing! But the Hebrews writer tells us, **“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days”** (Hebrews 11:30 [RSV]). It was **“by faith”** the walls fell because God makes the connection, not man!

Let us now take a few moments to turn in our Bibles and see another example before us this evening. Follow along, if you will, as we read from 2 Kings 5:8-14.

8. But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you rent your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel." 9. So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the door of Elisha's house.

10. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." 11. But Naaman was angry, and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and cure the leper. 12. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

13. But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" 14. So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Was there something magical about the waters of the Jordan River, some medicinal value they held that would cure leprosy, as happened with Naaman when he dipped in the water seven times as he had been instructed in 2 Kings 5:10? No, not all. According to Naaman, the rivers of Damascus were much grander than the Jordan River! But as Naaman learned, it was his faith response which saved this Gentile Syrian commander (Luke 4:27).

When giving his testimony regarding his own conversion to Christ before the Jews in Jerusalem, Paul, quoting Ananias in Acts 22:16, said, **“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”** What does immersion in water have to do with the forgiveness of sins? Does physical water have the power to remove spiritual sin? No again! There is no power in the water itself. The power of salvation to remove sins only comes when god intervenes, and God makes the connection, not man.

The Hebrews writer tells us in Hebrews 11:1 [RSV], **“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”** Faith is taking God at His word. The master at the wedding feast in Cana we read of earlier would never have tasted the newly produced superior wine had he not acted in faith and done as Jesus had instructed him. When the ancient Israelites conquered Jericho it was because they acted upon their faith by marching around the city as commanded. Because they did, they were able to experience the joy of witnessing Jericho’s mighty walls come tumbling down when they shouted out following the blast of the sound of the trumpet blowing. Naaman, too, though initially reluctant to do such a small thing, was cured of his leprosy once he dipped seven times in the Jordan River as Elisha, the prophet of God, told him.

Let us now turn to the *Gospel of Matthew* and read from chapter 7 verses 21-27 [RSV].

21. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in Heaven. 22. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' 23. And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you evildoers.'

24. “Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; 25. and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; 27. and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.”

What Jesus is saying is that those who wish to call Him Lord and be called the children of God need to be doers of His word. To take Jesus at His word means one must act upon it. It is a foolish man who deludes and deceives himself into believing that He can remain outside the Lord’s will and be somehow pleasing to the Lord. But the foolish man will not be able to fool the Lord. The Lord knows who are His own.

This concept of doing, or as how I look to look at it, exhibiting saving, obedient faith, is echoed by the Lord’s brother, James, who writes in James 1:21-25 [RSV], saying, **21. Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; 24. for he**

observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing.

Jesus has **“all authority”** (Matthew 28:18), and if we are going to call Him our Lord, then we must do as He says: Jesus asked in Luke 6:46 [RSV], **“Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?”** If Jesus is truly our Lord, we will do what He says.

Whether we accept it or not, the authority Jesus wields is over Heaven and Earth today. He does not need man's approval!

Listen to what the Lord said to Moses to tell the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 18:18-19 [RSV]. ***18. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19. And whoever will not give heed to My words which He shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.***

God, speaking through Moses, foretold of a time to come in which He would raise a Prophet and, like Moses, be a Lawgiver. Jesus was the fulfillment of this prophecy of supreme authority stated in Deuteronomy 18. Many times during His ministry Jesus proclaimed how He spoke only what the Father had delivered to Him to speak. He and the Father were one in mind and accord and purpose. God said those who would reject His Prophet and His words would have to answer to Him. That, dear friends, is a frightening proposal, to find oneself in the hands of an angry, wrathful God. This is why Jesus tells us in John 12:48 that in the judgment we will be judged by His words.

Now, if you would please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 17 as we read the first nine verses [RSV].

1. And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. 2. And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light. 3. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him.

4. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah."

5. He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a Voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." 6. When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe. 7. But Jesus came and touched them,

saying, "Rise, and have no fear." 8. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. 9. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

Let us take a look at this well-known passage of Scripture in light of Jesus fulfilling all of the Law of Moses. Deuteronomy 19:15 [RSV] states, **"A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed; only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained."**

At the Mount of Transfiguration, God demonstrated that Moses and Elijah were not on equal footing with Jesus. This is a demonstration to three witnesses that Jesus Christ was Who He claimed to be. In all three accounts of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, we are given the names of the three disciples who accompanied Jesus and who stood as human witnesses to the glory that was Christ's. There were also three heavenly witnesses, Moses, Elijah, and the voice of God from Heaven. Therefore, the Old Testament law of three witnesses required to attest to any fact (Deuteronomy 19:15) was satisfied both in Earth and in Heaven.

The transfiguration of Jesus Christ was a unique display of His divine character and a glimpse of the glory which Jesus had before He came to Earth in human form. This truth is emphasized for us in a passage in the Apostle Paul's letter to Phillippi. **5. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6. Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7. but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. 9. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, 11. and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** (Philippians 2:5-11 [RSV])

The Son of God came to Earth in the form of a man to be the true servant of God and to gift mankind with the greatest gift ever given, eternal life. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ was a visible sign in the presence of reliable witnesses of the reality of the power of God and the glory, which is Christ Jesus. God's voice declared at the Mount of Transfiguration, **"Listen to Him!"** (Matthew 17:5 [RSV]) Mary, the Lord's mother, told the servants, **"Do whatever He tells you."** Will you not do so today?

May the Lord bless you!