**BCM Bible Study – March 14/15, 2018**

**Sign #1: Jesus Changes Water into Wine (John 2:1-11)**

Intro: *For the rest of the semester, we will be studying the 7 recorded miracles in the gospel of John.*

* What is your initial reaction to the idea of miracles? Do you struggle with them? Why do you think they are included in the Bible?

*What is striking about these miracles is that John never uses the word “miracle,” but always refers to them as “signs”. In fact, the book of John includes less miracles than the other gospels, but each one included is intended to be a sign that Jesus is the “long awaited Messiah and Son of God.” (ESV Study Bible) Not only do these miracles point to the identity of Jesus, they reveal the identity of God the Father – the Son does nothing that the Father isn’t doing. (ACU) As such, we will be looking to discern what Old Testament Messianic symbol Jesus intends to fulfill as well as what Jesus is revealing about himself and the Father by means of the sign he is performing. It is also worth noting that these signs are always done on a large scale (Jesus feeds 5,000, one of the people has been sick for 38 years, etc.), highlighting the magnificence of his Messianic identity. (ESV Study Bible)*

Fun Facts about John:

* John was the last of the gospels written, likely after 70 AD.
* John is one of the 12 disciples and is the brother of James. Along with Simon (Peter) and Andrew, these 2 sets of fisherman brothers were called to follow Jesus around the same time. John is traditionally known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”
* The gospel is written with both a Jewish and Gentile audience in mind. As such, John uses both Gentile concepts (logos – “the Word” that becomes flesh) and Jewish ideas that will point to Jesus’ Messianic identity – our focus for this series.
* John includes a purpose statement for his gospel: **Read John 20:30-31**
  + In your own words, and based on this text, why did John write this book?
  + Why would believing in the signs of Jesus accomplish what John desires?

Water into Wine: **Read John 2:1-12**

* The first point of interest in this story is Jesus’ response to his mother in verse 4. Why does this seem odd? Why do Jesus’ actions in this story make this interaction seem even stranger?
  + Note: Scholars agree that the term “woman” is not one of disrespect. John Piper suggests rather that it creates relational distance between Jesus and his mother. In other words, instead of calling her “mom” he calls her “ma’am.” (Piper)
  + **Read Luke 14:26, Mark 3:31-35, John 8:28-29**
  + How do these verses shed light on Jesus’ interaction with his mother?
  + We are called to love our families well, but our first allegiance is to Christ alone. There should be nothing competing for control of your life, just as there weren’t in Jesus’ life. (Piper)
    - What do you think this should look like in your life?
    - What are some challenges that come from this potential tension?
  + Another aspect of this part of the story is that Jesus’ mother, by nature of her relationship with him, has no special spiritual privilege. “It doesn’t matter what family line we come from…Faith, not family, makes you his friend.” (Piper)
    - How does this encourage you in light of your own family situation?
    - In what ways does this challenge you to own, not inherit, your faith?
* The second point of interest in this story is the water jars that Jesus uses. These purification jars were not what people would use to store water or wine for drinking, but were used to store water used for bathing – for ritual purifying. (Many examples in Lev. 14-16 if you’re interested, also Mark 7:3-4)
  + Note: Every time Jesus says “My hour has not yet come” in the book of John, it points toward his death and resurrection.
    - Knowing this, why do you think Jesus did what he does? What is he saying that he is going to do?
  + **Read John 1:16-17.** That fact that Jesus uses large purification jars to produce wine is significant. It seems that Jesus wants to say that this is what “my hour” will be like: “I will take the purification rituals of Israel and replace them with a decisively new way of purification—namely, with my blood.” (Piper) He has saved the best wine for now – he is presenting a better way of purification. Also note that the jars are large, the first of Jesus large-scale signs, highlighting the magnificence of what he is going to do.
    - The new covenant removes the demand to purify ourselves before God. In what way do you struggle with this? How do you attempt to seek purity outside of him?
* The third point of interest in this story surrounds the fact that Jesus chose to do his first sign at a wedding and with wine. **Read Amos 9:14-15, Isaiah 25:6-8, and Rev. 19:6-9**
  + Note: The symbolism of this first sign announces that the long-awaited restoration of God’s people (partially experienced at the return from Babylonian exile) is finally taking place. (ACU)
  + Note: There is a great deal of Old Testament imagery that pictures Israel as breaking her marriage covenant with God at the hands of idols. In this passage we see that “Jesus plays the role of the perfect, all-providing Bridegroom. Out of water comes wine—better than any husband could provide.” (Piper)
    - How do these verses and information enrich your understanding of John 2?
    - In what way do these passages give you hope and build excitement for what Jesus is pointing to with this sign?
    - How does the picture of the perfect bridegroom impact you?

Conclusion

* How is Jesus’ glory revealed in this passage? (v.11) In other words, what is Jesus telling us about himself through this sign?
* What do we learn about God the Father?

All John Piper material from: https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/obedient-son-ultimate-purifier-all-providing-bridegroom

All ACU information from: http://www.acu.edu/content/dam/acu/website/Siburt%20Institute/Documents/Resources/Bible%20Study%20Resources/Signs%20of%20John%20Curriculum.pdf